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ABSTRACT

A study of research was conducted to determine how welfare and work policies enacted in 1996 targeted at low-income parents have influenced their adolescent children. Using meta-analytic techniques, the research synthesis integrates survey data collected from parents in eight studies of 16 different welfare and employment programs, focusing on children aged 12 to 18 when surveyed, as well as drawing on ethnographic case studies. In each study, some parents were randomly assigned to a program that included some combination of three key policies--mandatory employment activities, earnings supplements, and time limits on welfare receipt--while others were randomly assigned to a control group that was neither eligible for the program's services nor subject to its requirements. Key findings of the studies were the following: (1) parents in the programs being studied reported worse school performance, a higher rate of grade repetition, and more use of special educational services for their adolescent children than did control group parents; (2) no single one of the three policies studied could explain the programs' effects on adolescents; (3) adolescents with younger siblings experienced the most troubling effects (poor school performance, suspension or dropping out of school), perhaps because they were more likely than the control group to provide care for their siblings. The study points to the difficulties low-income parents face when forced to juggle often-inflexible mandatory work or training requirements and multiple child-care responsibilities. Study methodology is examined in two appendixes. (Contains 63 references.) (KC)

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ED 465 122

The Next Generation

How Welfare and Work Policies for Parents Affect Adolescents

A Synthesis of Research

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Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation

The Next Generation Project

This report is part of the Next Generation, a project that examines the effects of welfare, antipoverty, and employment policies on children and families. Drawing on rich data from recent welfare reform evaluations, the project aims to inform the work of policymakers, practitioners, and researchers by identifying policy-relevant lessons that cut across evaluations.

Foundation partners
The Next Generation project is funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, William T. Grant Foundation, and John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

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The project is a collaboration among researchers from MDRC, the University of Texas at Austin, Northwestern University, the University of California at Los Angeles, Kent State University, the University of Oregon, the University of Michigan, New York University, and the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation.

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Overview

The federal law that overhauled the nation's welfare system in 1996 aimed to break the cycle of poverty through its effects not only on welfare recipients but also on their children. While it was feared that some of the policy changes might harm young children, it was generally believed that older children would benefit from new community norms and the presence of working parents as role models. But analyses from several MDRC studies released in recent years suggest that the new policies did not bring benefits to adolescents. With reauthorization of the 1996 law now under debate, the Next Generation project — an innovative collaboration among MDRC and other leading research institutions — has produced this research synthesis, the first comprehensive and systematic look at how welfare and work policies targeted at low-income parents have influenced their adolescent children. Using meta-analytic techniques, the work integrates survey data collected from parents in eight MDRC studies of 16 different welfare and employment programs, focusing on children aged 12 to 18 when the surveys were conducted; it also draws on ethnographic case studies to flesh out the quantitative findings.

In each study, some parents were randomly assigned to a program that included some combination of three key policies — mandatory employment activities, earnings supplements, and time limits on welfare receipt — while others were randomly assigned to a control group that was neither eligible for the program's services nor subject to its requirements. Random assignment ensures that any differences that emerged between the two groups — or their children — are attributable to the program. Although the studies examined programs that began operating before 1996, the three policies examined here have been adopted, in various combinations, in many states' programs since welfare reform was passed. Thus, this is the best body of evidence to date concerning how low-income adolescents fare as a result of policies aimed at increasing their parents' employment.

Key Findings

- When asked about their adolescent children, parents in the programs under study reported worse school performance, a higher rate of grade repetition, and more use of special educational services than did control group parents. On average, the programs did not, however, affect the proportion of adolescents who dropped out of, were suspended from, or completed school. There were likewise no overall differences between the program and control groups in the proportion of adolescents who had children. Girls and boys fared similarly on all the outcomes examined.

- No single one of the three policies under study could explain the programs' effects on adolescents. For instance, negative effects were observed both for the programs that required parents to work or to participate in work activities in order to receive welfare benefits and for the programs in which parents' work participation was purely voluntary.

- Adolescents with younger siblings experienced the most troubling effects. As well as showing larger unfavorable effects on school performance and receipt of special educational services than did the full sample, program group adolescents with younger siblings were more likely than their control group counterparts to be suspended or expelled from and to drop out of school — perhaps because they were also more likely to provide care for their siblings. Program group adolescents without younger siblings, in contrast, were more likely than their control group counterparts to participate in out-of-school activities and experienced few effects on school outcomes.

Together, the findings point to the challenges faced by low-income single parents who work — most of whom hold inflexible, unpredictable low-wage jobs — as well as the unmet child care needs associated with their employment. Possible strategies for mitigating the negative effects of welfare reform on adolescent children include reducing the need for them to assume adult responsibilities at home, ensuring that they have access to high-quality supervised activities outside school, and finding ways to resolve the conflicts that their low-income parents face in juggling parenthood and inflexible employment.

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Unit 2: Impacts on Adolescent Outcomes, by Gender
Unit 3: Impacts on Adolescent Outcomes, by Age
Unit 4: Impacts on Adolescent Outcomes, by Presence of a Younger Sibling in the Household
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Preface

This document is part of the Next Generation project, a collaboration among researchers at MDRC and other leading research institutions that is aimed at building our understanding of how welfare, employment, and antipoverty policies affect low-income children and families. The benefits of the project's interdisciplinary approach, which integrates the work of social scientists and policy analysts from myriad fields, are apparent in the rich combination of quantitative and ethnographic analysis on display here.

The third in a series of research syntheses from the Next Generation project, this document provides the first comprehensive look at how welfare and work policies directed at increasing employment among low-income parents affect their adolescent children using data from several recent random assignment studies conducted by MDRC. The results have led to the surprising conclusion that, unlike elementary school-aged children, adolescents whose parents were subject to these policies fared worse than their control group counterparts. Although the effects were small when averaged across programs, all three policies examined in this document — mandatory employment services, earnings supplements, and welfare time limits — had negative effects on some adolescent school outcomes. A closer look reveals that the detrimental effects were concentrated among adolescents who had younger siblings, suggesting that the responsibilities adolescents face at home or even the size of their families may be important in determining how these effects play out.

This research synthesis demonstrates why social programs need rigorous evaluation and why evaluations should cast the net widely. Several years ago, state and federal officials and social scientists concerned with welfare reform's effects on children decided to emphasize studying younger children as opposed to adolescents. As it turns out, the results concerning both age groups have attracted keen interest, serving to inform policymakers and researchers alike.

The present findings underscore the importance of understanding the chain of effects connecting policies targeted at adults and the well-being of their children. The policy implications depend crucially on the reasons behind the negative adolescent effects. If a lack of maternal supervision is the main problem, then more access to high-quality structured activities for adolescents while mothers are working could help. If adolescents' responsibility for the care of younger siblings is the culprit, however, then younger children's needs would have to be addressed for teens to be able to take advantage of such positive opportunities. Finally, if the problem is that single mothers who work face job inflexibility that prevents them from keeping their children on track in school, then changes in the welfare system or in employers' policies may offer the best chance of a solution.

These are the kinds of complex issues that the Next Generation project's interdisciplinary approach allows us to address. As welfare and employment policies evolve at the federal, state, and local levels, we will continue to bring rigorous research evidence to bear on how these policies are shaping the lives of the next generation.

Gordon Berlin
Senior Vice President

Acknowledgments

Since its inception, the Next Generation project has benefited from the support and vision of its foundation funding partners — the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the William T. Grant Foundation, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Support for this synthesis work on adolescents has also been provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation.

The analyses underlying this document rely on data from program evaluations conducted by our colleagues at MDRC and their research collaborators. We are grateful to the studies' original sponsors for permitting us to analyze the data for the purpose of drawing cross-study policy lessons. The underlying evaluations were supported by numerous federal agencies, state agencies, and foundations, which are acknowledged by name in the individual evaluation reports.

The Next Generation project is particularly indebted to officials at the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), both part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, for the foresight and leadership they provided throughout the original evaluations. ASPE helped pioneer research on welfare and employment programs' effects on children by collecting information on children's outcomes in the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (NEWWS). ACF developed the Project on State-Level Child Outcomes, a current effort to include comparable measures of children's well-being in five state welfare reform studies.

At MDRC, Pamela Morris began the adolescent synthesis work presented here and provided advice throughout the course of its completion, while Howard Bloom provided invaluable guidance on our conceptualization of the meta-analytic work. Ellen Scott of Oregon State University and Kathryn Edin of Northwestern University contributed to the insights gleaned in the qualitative research, and Susan Clampet-Lundquist of the University of Pennsylvania and Kristy Harris of Kent State University prepared summaries of the qualitative case studies. A number of additional reviewers provided comments on earlier drafts of this report. Judith Gueron, Gordon Berlin, Charles Michalopoulos, and Gayle Hamilton of MDRC, Aletha Huston of the University of Texas, and Hirokazu Yoshikawa of New York University offered important feedback at various stages of the analysis and writing. Mark Lipsey of Vanderbilt University deserves special thanks for his willingness to offer his expert guidance on meta-analytic methods on short notice. We would also like to thank Howard Rolston of ACF, J. Lawrence Aber of Columbia University, Jennifer Brooks of Child Trends, Jodie Levin-Epstein of the Center for Law and Social Policy, and participants in a series of Washington, DC, briefings for their helpful perspectives on the results and their interpretation. John Wallace played a central role in disseminating this information to policymakers by spearheading the briefings.

We also gratefully acknowledge Chris Rodrigues of MDRC for his research assistance throughout the production of this synthesis and Jared Smith and Tracey Hoy of MDRC and Bessie Wilkerson of Northwestern University for their analytical assistance. Valerie M. Chase edited the document, and Stephanie Cowell did the word-processing.

The Authors

Introduction

Employment among low-income parents increased dramatically during the 1990s, fueled by trends such as the booming economy and passage in 1996 of the federal welfare reform law, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). Particularly in light of new welfare policies that encourage or require low-income single parents — the large majority of whom are women — to work, there is keen interest in the question of whether and how children are affected by changes in maternal employment.[1]

Most research on this question has focused on preschool- and elementary school-aged children because they are viewed as especially vulnerable to rises in maternal employment and drops in family income. The effects on adolescent children have received less attention. One reason may be that many policymakers assume that welfare reform's new work participation mandates, supports for working parents (such as earnings supplements and child care subsidies), and time limits on federal cash welfare receipt will, if anything, promote adolescents' development into healthy, productive adults. In particular, some have argued that as community norms change in response to welfare reform, adolescents will benefit from exposure to its strong messages regarding personal responsibility and to working parents as role models. But other possibilities lurk: Increased employment among low-income mothers could keep them from playing as much of a supervisory role in their children's lives and place excessive demands on adolescents at a crucial point in their development. It is difficult to predict how adolescents will respond to changes wrought by new welfare and work policies.

Congress is due to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program — which PRWORA established in place of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) — this year. With an eye to informing the debate about modifying the law, this research synthesis examines how welfare and employment policies have influenced recipients' adolescent children using data from eight studies of 16 different programs. The goal of this document is to use the best body of evidence available to address the following questions: What are the effects on adolescents of welfare and work policies designed to increase employment among their parents? Do the effects last into young adulthood? What drives the effects? What are the implications for policy?

Rounding out a series that began with analyses focused on adults and younger children,[2] this synthesis of findings on adolescents was produced as part of the Next Generation

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[1] Because most of these parents are women, they are sometimes referred to in this document as mothers or by using feminine pronouns.

[2] Bloom and Michalopoulos, 2001; Morris et al., 2001.

project, an innovative collaboration among researchers at the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC), several other leading research institutions, and the foundation funding partners. The aim of the Next Generation project is to understand the effects of welfare and employment policies on low-income children and families. Like the earlier work in this series, the present analysis stands on the shoulders of a uniquely rigorous and comprehensive set of experimental studies conducted by MDRC from the 1980s through the present.

All eight studies examined here used a random assignment research design, widely considered the best way to estimate the effects of social policies and programs. In each study, each parent was randomly assigned either to a program group, which was eligible for the services and subject to the requirements of the program under study, or to a control group, which was not. Assigning people to research groups by chance ensures that there are no differences, on average, between program group members and control group members — or the two groups' children — at the outset of the study. Therefore, any differences that subsequently emerge between the two groups — whether with respect to parents' earnings, children's social behavior, or any other outcome — can be confidently attributed to the program being tested rather than to demographic or other factors.

Since all the evaluations examined here began prior to the 1996 federal welfare reform legislation and the establishment of TANF, it is important to note that this document does not provide a summary of the effects of current TANF policies on adolescents. It does make an important contribution to welfare reform policy discussions and policymakers' understanding of how policies and programs targeted at low-income parents affect children and youth, however, because the evaluations looked at policies that have since been incorporated, in various combinations, into most state welfare programs. Moreover, thanks to their random assignment designs, these studies offer direct evidence about how particular policy interventions aimed at affecting parental employment, welfare use, and family income affect adolescent well-being.

To complement data from the experimental studies, this synthesis also draws on data gathered from interviews with low-income mothers conducted as part of MDRC's Project on Devolution and Urban Change, which examines how low-income urban families have fared since TANF's passage. The in-depth, open-ended interviews discussed in this document took place between 1997 and 2001 and included mothers in Cleveland and Philadelphia who received welfare and lived in high-poverty neighborhoods.

For low-income adolescents, the stakes in the welfare reform and other social policy debates are high. These youth are already less likely than their higher-income counterparts to complete high school and become successful young adults. It is clearly important to design policies that promote their development or — at a minimum — leave them no worse off.

How Welfare and Work Policies Can Affect Adolescents

In the literature, hypotheses abound about how welfare and work policies like those examined here, which are targeted at adults, can indirectly affect younger children.[3] There is now considerable evidence that reforms that increase parents' economic security especially can have important positive consequences for their elementary school-aged children.[4] Specifically, programs that increased family income (through higher employment) or increased stable employment improved outcomes such as school achievement for this group of children, perhaps owing to positive changes in the home environment or in child care experiences.[5]

One study of a program that encouraged employment among single-parent welfare recipients revealed — alongside benefits for elementary school-aged children — unexpected negative effects for adolescents; in particular, the adolescent children of parents in this program were more likely than their control group counterparts to engage in minor delinquency and to use tobacco, alcohol, or drugs.[6] The results of this study were the first to highlight the potentially important role of age and stage of development in influencing the effects on children of welfare and work policies targeted at parents.

The key policies under examination here — mandatory employment services, earnings supplements, and welfare time limits, all described in more detail in the next section — are designed to raise maternal employment levels and family income and to reduce receipt of public assistance, and some are also designed to raise family income. As is the case for elementary school-aged children, adolescents might be affected by these policies through changes in families' financial resources, parental stress, the amount of time that parents spend away from the family, or exposure to new role models. Moreover, prior research has shown that adolescent outcomes are affected by changes in family structure[7] and residential or school changes,[8] which in turn can be affected by welfare and work policies. Adolescence is a period of dramatic physical and emotional transition, marked by puberty and new expectations with regard to behavior, responsibility, self-awareness, and independence. It has been argued that learning to be productive and economically self-sufficient and to form healthy social relationships is central to successful adolescent development.[9] The effects of welfare and work policies on adolescents are

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[3] See, for example, Child Trends, 1999; Huston, 2002; and Morris et al., 2001.

[4] Morris et al., 2001; Zaslow et al., 2002.

[5] For further discussion on some of these possible pathways based on findings from the studies included in this synthesis, see Morris, Scott, and London (forthcoming) and Huston and Gennetian (forthcoming).

[6] Morris and Michalopoulos, 2000.

[7] Hill, Yeung, and Duncan, 2001.

[8] See www.mdrc.org.

[9] Connell, Aber, and Walker, 1995.

likely to hinge on the interaction between the changes in adolescents' lives caused by these policies and the developmental processes of adolescence.

It has been hypothesized that welfare and work policies might affect adolescents negatively if, as their mothers' work effort increases, they are more often left unsupervised or increasingly required to assume adult responsibilities such as being employed more than part time.[10] Previous nonexperimental research has indeed found that greater parental monitoring of adolescent children is associated with less problem behavior,[11] lower levels of drug or alcohol abuse,[12] and higher levels of academic achievement.[13] Furthermore, although adolescents may not benefit from all types of supervised out-of-school activities,[14] participation in high-quality, structured activities outside school is associated with better adolescent outcomes.[15]

While taking on adult roles may afford adolescents greater autonomy and an improved self-image, it may also disrupt their schooling or encourage them to engage in delinquent behavior. Having paid employment, for example, may make adolescents more employable as adults, but it also increases the likelihood of their being exposed to and encouraged to engage in adult behaviors such as smoking, drinking, and drug use and of having conflicts or disagreements with their parents.[16] The negative consequences have been found to be particularly pronounced among adolescents who work for pay more than 20 hours per week.[17] In discussing two other studies that likewise revealed a pattern of negative effects on adolescents,[18] one set of authors proposed that welfare and work policies not only might reduce the amount of supervision that adolescents receive and cause them to take on more adult responsibilities but also might decrease the quality of adolescent-parent interactions.[19]

In summary, findings of negative effects on adolescents from multiple program evaluations conducted in the past two years have generated a number of hypotheses about how adolescents might be affected by welfare and work policies. This document strives to provide comprehensive experimental evidence on the effects of welfare and work policies on adolescent outcomes and to test hypotheses about what drives the effects. A detailed presentation of the hy-

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[10]Morris and Michalopoulos, 2000. These authors also found support for their hypothesis.

[11]Patterson, Bank, and Stoolmiller, 1990.

[12]Chilcoat and Anthony, 1996.

[13]Baker and Stevenson, 1986.

[14]See, for example, Mahoney and Stattin, 2000; Mahoney, Stattin, and Magnusson, 2001.

[15]Pettit et al., 1999; Posner and Vandell, 1994, 1999.

[16]National Academy of Sciences, 1998.

[17]Mortimer et al., 1996; Steinberg and Dornbusch, 1991.

[18]One was a study of the Family Transition Program (Bloom et al., 2000), and the other was a study of the Minnesota Family Investment Program (Gennetian and Miller, 2000).

[19]Brooks, Hair, and Zaslow, 2001.

potheses examined in this report and an expanded discussion of the relevant literature are provided in the second half of this document.

The Studies

Experimental Studies

Table 1 provides a summary of the eight experimental studies examined in this paper. All begun in the early to mid-1990s, the studies were conducted to estimate the effects on low-income families of programs designed primarily to increase parental employment. Many were pilot programs tested by individual states under waivers of AFDC program rules. Twelve of the programs required parents to work or to participate in work-related activities in order to receive welfare; eight offered earnings supplements to parents who worked (six of them while allowing parents to continue receiving welfare benefits); and two put time limits on the length of time that families could receive welfare. Table 1 highlights the key policy features tested in these studies and shows that some of the programs used more than one of the three key policies in combination. Each policy is now described in detail:

1. **Mandatory employment services.** The programs with mandatory employment services required parents to work or to participate in an activity designed to enhance their employability, such as job search or education and training. To enforce the mandate to participate, the programs could use a sanction; that is, if a parent did not comply with work requirements, the program could reduce her family's welfare grant.[20] The goal of programs with participation mandates was to increase welfare recipients' employment and employability; raising their income was not an explicit goal.

2. **Earnings supplements.** The programs with earnings supplements tried to "make work pay" by providing extra income to parents who received welfare and who were or became voluntarily employed. These work incentives took the form of a cash supplement tied to full-time work (such as in the New Hope Project and the Self-Sufficiency Project) or an earned income disregard, that is, a reduction in the amount of a parent's earnings that was deducted from her family's welfare grant relative to the deduction required under AFDC rules (such as in the Minnesota Family Investment Program). These programs aimed explicitly to increase both employment and income.

[20] In the programs discussed here, the sanction could take the form of a partial grant reduction, not a full-grant reduction as many states allow today.

Table 1

Descriptions of the Studies and Programs

Study	Program(s) Tested	Key Policy Features: Mandatory Employment Services	Key Policy Features: Earnings Supplements	Key Policy Features: Time Limits	Site(s)	When Study Began and Length of Follow-Up	Minimum Sample Size and Age Composition	Primary Source(s)
National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (NEWWS)	Human Capital Development (HCD) and Labor Force Attachment (LFA)	☑			Atlanta, GA; Grand Rapids, MI; and Riverside, CA	1991 60 months	2,397 adolescents aged 15 to 18 at follow-up	Hamilton et al., 2002
	Employment focused, with mixed initial activities	☑			Portland, OR			
Los Angeles Jobs-First Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Evaluation	Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN	☑			Los Angeles County	1996 24 months	461 adolescents aged 12 to 18 at follow-up	Freedman et al., 2000
Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Evaluation	Full MFIP for long-term recipients	☑	☑		Seven counties in Minnesota	1994 36 months	796 adolescents aged 13 to 18 at time of follow-up	Gennetian and Miller, 2000
	Full MFIP for recent applicants	☑	☑					
	MFIP Incentives Only for long-term recipients		☑					
Self-Sufficiency Project (SSP) Evaluation	Self-Sufficiency Project		☑		Two Canadian provinces	1992 36 months	868 adolescents aged 13 to 18 at follow-up	Morris and Michalopoulos, 2000

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Study	Program(s) Tested	Key Policy Features: Mandatory Employment Services	Key Policy Features: Earnings Supplements	Key Policy Features: Time Limits	Site(s)	When Study Began and Length of Follow-Up	Minimum Sample Size and Age Composition	Primary Source(s)
New Hope Project	New Hope Demonstration		☑		Milwaukee, WI	1994 24 months	274 adolescents aged 12 to 18 at follow-up	Bos et al., 1999; and Bos and Vargas, 2002
Welfare Restructuring Project (WRP) Evaluation	WRP Incentives Only		☑		Six welfare districts in Vermont	1994 42 months	496 adolescents aged 13.5 to 18 at follow-up	Bloom, Hendra, and Michalopoulos, 2000
	Full WRP	☑	☑					
Family Transition Program (FTP) Evaluation	Family Transition Program	☑	☑	☑	Escambia County, FL	1994 48 months	415 adolescents aged 14 to 18 at follow-up	Bloom et al., 2000
Jobs First Evaluation	Jobs First	☑	☑	☑	New Haven and Manchester, CT	1996 36 months	862 adolescents aged 13 to 18 at follow-up	Bloom et al., 2002

NOTE: [a]This feature of Full WRP is more accurately described as a time-triggered work requirement.

3. **Time limits.** The programs that imposed time limits on cash assistance receipt aimed to make welfare receipt temporary, initially by encouraging families to leave welfare and eventually by requiring them to do so. PRWORA set a lifetime limit of five years on federally funded cash assistance receipt, but states may shorten or extend time limits as well as exempt certain families. All the programs with time limits also included mandatory employment services and earnings supplements.

As seen in Table 1, some of the studies generated multiple estimates of program effects because (1) they tested more than one program model or a single model that was implemented in more than one site or (2) they calculated results for subgroups of people in the studies rather than for the whole sample. The National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (NEWWS), for example, looked at seven programs operated in four sites, while the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) evaluation examined two different programs, each of which was operated in several urban counties. One of the MFIP programs (MFIP Incentives Only) offered only an earnings supplement, while the other (Full MFIP) combined the earnings supplement offer with mandatory employment services; this document investigates the effects of Full MFIP on two groups of families — long-term welfare recipients and recent applicants (those who had received welfare for less than two years cumulatively before entering the study) — and the effects of MFIP Incentives Only on long-term recipients only.[21] The Vermont Welfare Restructuring Project (WRP) also tested two programs, one that offered an earnings supplement alone (WRP Incentives Only) and another that combined an earnings supplement with a time-triggered work requirement (Full WRP); recipients in the latter program were required to work in order to remain eligible for welfare after receiving benefits for a certain period of time. Because each of these three studies yielded multiple estimates of effects, the analyses in this synthesis are based on up to 17 estimates per adolescent outcome — depending on data availability.

Sample. The present analysis looks at adolescents who were roughly 10 to 16 years old at the time their families entered the studies and 12 to 18 years old when the follow-up survey data used here were collected.[22] By focusing on adolescents in this age range, this analysis maximizes the comparability of results across studies and minimizes the overlap between the samples examined here and the samples of elementary school-aged children whose results have been synthesized elsewhere.[23]

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[21] Miller et al., 2000.

[22] Because the sample is limited to children who were 12 to 18 at the time of the survey interview, the results for individual evaluations presented here may differ from those presented in the individual evaluation reports.

[23] See Morris et al. (2001), who examined children in the same studies who were aged roughly 2 to 9 at study entry.

Depending on the study, the length of the follow-up period ranges from 24 months to 60 months after random assignment and covers different stretches of the calendar period from 1991 to 1999. Thus, all the studies were conducted during a period of economic growth during which there was an unusual amount of public discussion about welfare reform and its new requirements. Because the age range of the adolescents included in the analysis varies with the length of follow-up (Table 1), not all the samples span the full age range of 10 to 16 at study entry. Nevertheless, all the adolescents examined here fell within this range. For example, because NEWWS had a five-year follow-up period, the sample of adolescents from that study who are included in this document is restricted to those who were 10 to 13 at study entry and therefore 15 to 18 at the study's five-year follow-up point.

Analyses were conducted for the full adolescent sample and separately for age and gender subgroups. Previous research has shown that the effects of key program-related events, such as the mother's entry into employment, can depend on when they occur in a child's life.[24] Research has also shown that many of the processes involved in normal adolescent development differ markedly between boys and girls.[25]

Measures. All the studies collected follow-up data during in-home or telephone surveys that asked parents to provide information about a variety of family outcomes, from detailed employment histories to measures of material hardship, family composition, and child care. The percentage of sample members who responded to these follow-up surveys was generally about 80 percent. Although the child-related questions on the surveys focused on preschool-aged and elementary school-aged children, they also included some questions about all children in the family, including adolescents. Most pertained to children's school outcomes (such as school performance and grade repetition) and school-related behavior.[26] Although several studies measured teen parenting, only the Self-Sufficiency Project (SSP) collected additional information about adolescents' behavior outside school, such as smoking, drinking, and staying out late; and getting into fights.

In all the studies but SSP, which also included teacher reports, outcomes for adolescents were measured using maternal reports. At first, this may appear to be a problem because adolescents may not share information about all their activities with their parents, and parents may understand things differently than their adolescents do. Maternal misreporting is unlikely to compromise the experimental comparisons made here, however, because there is no reason to think the prevalence of misreporting differs between research groups; for example, even if mothers have a tendency to overestimate their children's school performance, as long as pro-

[24]Graber and Brooks-Gunn, 1999; Sessa and Steinberg, 1991.

[25]Eccles, 1999.

[26]The present analysis excludes measures of health and safety because of limited data availability.

gram and control group mothers show this tendency to an equal extent, estimates of the program's effect on school performance will be unbiased. Moreover, most of the measures relate to important events or conditions in adolescents' lives (such as dropping out of school or repeating a grade) about which their parents are likely to know. Finally, for some outcomes, there is evidence that maternal reports are consistent with other measures. For example, in the SSP study, mothers' assessments of their adolescent children's school performance were moderately correlated with adolescents' actual performance on achievement tests (Appendix A).

Some aspects of adolescent well-being were assessed only at the time of the final (or, in the studies that are still under way, the most recent) follow-up point. Others, such as grade repetition, were assessed more than once during the last couple of years of the follow-up period. These and other details about the measures used in the present analysis are described in Appendix A.

Methods. As discussed in the first section, all eight studies used a random assignment research design. In each study, the heads of low-income households in a given location — most of them welfare recipients[27] — were randomly assigned to a program group or a control group. Whereas each program group was eligible for the services and subject to the requirements of the program under study, the control group was not; in most of the studies, control group members remained under the AFDC system. As pointed out earlier, when people are randomly assigned to research groups, any differences between them — or their children — that appear later can be confidently attributed to the fact that some of them were enrolled in the program while others were not. Based on this logic, the difference between the two groups with respect to an outcome (for instance, parents' average earnings or children's social behavior) is an estimate of the program's effect, or impact, on that outcome. To increase the precision of the estimates, the impacts were estimated in a regression framework, controlling for a variety of baseline characteristics, including the parent's age, education level, employment history, and family composition; adjustments were also made to the standard errors of the impact estimates to take account of the fact that some families had more than one child in the sample.

All the program impacts were tested for statistical significance, as were some of the differences between subgroup impacts. In this document, an impact is considered statistically significant if, based on the results of a statistical test,[28] the probability that it occurred by chance is found to be less than 10 percent or less. Unless otherwise noted, all the impacts discussed in the text are statistically significant. In the figures and tables, asterisks or dagger symbols are used to flag the statistically significant impacts; the larger the number of symbols next to an impact, the less likely the impact is to be due to chance.

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[27] Most of the studies also included welfare applicants and/or other low-income families, but for simplicity sample members are often referred to as "welfare recipients" in this document.

[28] In most cases, this was a two-tailed t-test.

To draw overall conclusions about the effects of welfare and work policies on adolescents, this research synthesis combines the results for individual programs using meta-analytic methods described in Appendix B. In brief, each program's impact on each measure was converted to an effect size — that is, divided by the control group standard deviation — and a weighted average of the effect sizes across programs was computed. This procedure yielded, for each measure, the average outcome for the program groups and the average outcome for the control groups. Each average effect size was tested for statistical significance and then converted back to the original metric — usually percentage points. To glean a better understanding of the factors that may account for the average impacts, the variation in impacts across different types of programs and different adolescent subgroups was also analyzed.

This meta-analytic approach is an improvement over that adopted in earlier, less systematic attempts to summarize results across these studies. It is important to keep in mind, however, that although the techniques used here allow for summarization and statistical testing of patterns of effects, they cannot attain the same level of rigor as would be possible if one large random assignment experiment were conducted.

Ethnographic Study

The ethnographic data included in this report reflect preliminary analyses aimed at understanding how adolescents fared as their mothers adjusted to the participation mandates, work incentives, and time limits introduced by welfare reform in 1996.[29] All the data were supplied by mothers; no children were interviewed directly. Although these data do not afford the kinds of quantitative impact estimates that the experimental studies do, they complement the findings from the meta-analysis by illustrating some of the dynamic processes that underlie both positive and negative outcomes among adolescents.[30]

The ethnographic case studies were constructed using longitudinal data collected under the auspices of the Urban Change project in Cleveland and Philadelphia.[31] At the initiation of that study, three neighborhoods that met specific poverty, welfare receipt, and racial composi-

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[29]Out of the 40 households in Cleveland that were still in the study at the second follow-up point, 13 had a child who was aged 12 to 17 at study entry; the total number of children in this age range was 17. In most cases, the adolescent was the oldest of several children still living in the household. In Philadelphia, eight households had a child aged 12 to 18 at study entry and were included in the sample for this analysis. Not all the data related to adolescents in the Urban Change sample have yet been analyzed.

[30]For additional ethnographic studies of welfare reform's effects on children, see the Next Generation project's working papers series at www.mdrc.org/NextGeneration.

[31]Los Angeles and Miami are the other two counties included in the Urban Change project. For additional details on the study design, see Quint et al., 1999.

tion criteria were identified in each city.[12] By posting flyers and going door to door in the neighborhoods as well as taking referrals from social service agencies, ethnographers in Cleveland and Philadelphia recruited approximately 15 welfare-reliant women from each neighborhood to participate in the study and completed multiple follow-up interviews with all 75 women. Over the period from late 1997 to late 2001, the women in Cleveland participated in four annual interviews, and the women in Philadelphia participated in three annual interviews. Shorter interim interviews were also conducted with the women in each site. All the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

The Effects of Welfare and Work Policies on Adolescents

Qualitative Findings from Interviews

To illustrate some of the processes by which adolescents may be affected by their mothers' transitions from welfare to work or longer work hours, this section starts by presenting three ethnographic case studies that provide rich, contextualized accounts of changes in mothers' and adolescents' lives.

The first case is Denise,[13] a 32-year-old African-American mother living in Philadelphia who had sons aged 9 and 12 when the interviews began. When she first enrolled in the study, Denise was working two part-time jobs without benefits during the school year — one at the school board and the other at a local university — and was unemployed during the summer. Denise stayed at these jobs for the first two years of the study, at which time she quit both for a full-time job with benefits. Around the same time, Denise married a man she had been living with for a while, so two incomes were supporting the household.

Denise felt positive about working because she felt she was setting an example for her sons. She believed her working would give them an incentive to work themselves when they became adults. In her words, "[They'll think,] 'Oh, well, she got up and she went out here, and she did what she had to do and . . . she's not out, hanging out, running the streets, you know, doing drugs and parties and all that.'" She also thought her sons felt "happy" because she felt good about herself when she worked. At the same time, Denise expressed concern throughout the study about how her working severely curtailed the amount of time she spent with her chil-

[12]In each city, two neighborhoods where between 30 percent and 39 percent of families lived at or below the poverty level and at least 20 percent of families received welfare were identified — one that was predominantly white and one that was predominantly African-American; a third, predominantly African-American neighborhood where more than 40 percent of residents lived in poverty was also identified. For purposes of the study, neighborhoods were defined as one to four contiguous census tracts and therefore do not necessarily map onto neighborhoods as otherwise defined.

[13]Pseudonyms are used in all the case studies presented in this document.

dren, saying that she would only "see them in passing." Moreover, her work schedule prevented her from attending parent-teacher conferences at her oldest son's school. She said: "A lot of times the meetings is at night, and I can't make them. Like, my older son, I haven't met his teachers yet. And I feel kinda bad about that." Additionally, she could not be with her children when they came home from school to help them with their homework.

Denise's shift at her new, full-time job, from 3:30 P.M. to 11:30 P.M., also affected her ability to monitor her sons in the neighborhood. She reported that when they returned home from school, her sons would hang out with their friends or go to their grandfather's house down the street. They were responsible for dinner preparation (unless they ate at their grandfather's), their homework, and other chores. Denise worried about negative activities that her sons could get involved in as a result of her not being around to monitor them: "By me working at night, a lot of things is happening out here and I have boys. You know, so I'm leery about that. . . . I worry at times when I be at work." Her concern seemed well founded, as she and her sons lived in an extremely poor neighborhood struggling with drug trafficking and violence. Ultimately, concern about her sons' hanging out on the corner convinced her to change her shift to 12 A.M. to 8 A.M., so that she could be around to monitor them more. Despite her concerns about monitoring, Denise claimed that working full time did not have as negative an impact on her sons as it might have had had her sons been younger.

Many aspects of Denise's case appear to confirm welfare reform proponents' positive expectations regarding how new work requirements would affect adolescent children. Like many other women in the ethnographic study, she subscribed to the idea that work enhanced her self-esteem and that by working she served as a positive role model for her children.[14] The time crunch she mentioned is familiar even to more advantaged parents, although in her case it resulted in a potentially risky amount of unsupervised time for her children and a lack of connection between her and her children's teachers. Still, Denise felt that her employment was not harming her sons overall.

Gayle, a 38-year-old white single mother living in Cleveland, was not happy with how her employment was influencing her only child, Jane. Although Gayle had as associate's degree in administrative assistance from a community college when she entered the Urban Change study, she was unable to find a job in that field and began working at a local thrift store for minimum wage between the first and second interviews. Gayle was not satisfied with this job but took it because of welfare reform's work requirements, and she later left welfare. Ultimately, she lost the job and cycled back onto welfare for a while.

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[14]Scott, Edin, London, and Mazelis, 2001; London, Scott, Edin, and Hunter, 2001.

During the fourth interview, Gayle indicated that Jane, who was 9 when her mother entered the study, was having serious problems in school — in particular, she was skipping school frequently. Formerly a student who got Cs or better, Jane was now getting Ds and Fs. Partly because Gayle had been working, she didn't know exactly how much school Jane had missed. Gayle was afraid to confront her daughter or ask the school about the problem: "It's all gonna come down on me and I'm not ready to deal with it. I don't think I should be punished for that." Gayle was also frustrated because she believed Jane would go to school every day if Gayle were home more often and were more available to monitor her daughter's whereabouts.

Unlike Denise, Gayle clearly felt that work interfered with her ability to parent. Whether work itself was really to blame for Jane's declining school performance is difficult to determine. Disengagement from school is widespread among adolescents in all social strata, and Jane might have started having problems in school even if her mother hadn't gone to work. Nevertheless, work most likely limited the amount of time Gayle could monitor her daughter's behavior and perhaps also Gayle's ability to seek help with Jane's problems in school.

The third case study features Tina, a 35-year-old African-American mother of six living in Philadelphia. Tina's experiences highlight a different set of employment-related problems encountered by parents who receive welfare. Because of Tina's work schedule, the three oldest of her children who were still living at home had to take care of her two youngest children. This added responsibility cut into her older children's free time and appeared to hurt the school performance of Tamara, her eldest daughter. Tamara was responsible for waiting with the younger children for the van that took them to their daycare center. Because the van typically came late, Tamara was usually 20 to 30 minutes late for school. As her mother put it: "She's late every day for her school, every day. And what the school says to me is . . . they gotta do what they, what's their policy. She's gotta stay after school, do her detention . . . or she'll lose her credit out of her, out of that morning class 'cause she didn't get there on time. So she feels sad and I feel bad because I gotta be at work at 7. She can't be at school by 7 she can't. We all can't be at the same place at the same time." Tina suffered tremendous guilt for imposing on her older children a responsibility that she felt was properly her own.

These cases illustrate some of the myriad ways in which mothers' transitions to work and longer work hours in the wake of welfare reform might affect their adolescent children. Although Jane and Tamara both developed school attendance problems after their mothers became employed, for Jane the problem was her behavior, which may have worsened as a result of the reduction in her mother's time for parenting, whereas for Tamara new child care responsibilities got in the way. For Denise's sons, in contrast, the impacts of maternal employment seemed to be more positive than negative. The processes by which work demands translate into changes in adolescent well-being also appear to be diverse. For example, unlike the other two mothers, Denise pointed to the psychological benefits of work for herself and, through role modeling, for

her two sons. And although all three mothers reported having less time to spend monitoring and supervising their children and connecting with their children's teachers, the consequences differed from family to family. For Tamara, unlike the children in the other two families, the decrease in her mother's free time meant taking on responsibilities that conflicted with school. Additional ethnographic data are introduced at various points in this document to further illustrate the processes by which the welfare and work programs under study might have affected adolescent outcomes.

With the context of these three case studies in mind, the following presentation of the data for the 16 programs included in the meta-analysis explores both the effects of the programs on adolescent outcomes and the processes that might have driven the effects.

Quantitative Findings from Surveys

Table 2 summarizes the impacts of the programs on adolescents' school outcomes, including school performance, grade repetition, high school dropout, receipt of special educational services,[35] and suspensions.[36] Most of this information is presented graphically in Figure 1. Not all the studies measured all the outcomes; the number of programs for which data were available for each outcome ranges from 9 to 15, giving rise to 10 to 16 program-control group comparisons or impact estimates per outcome. The total number of adolescents represented in each impact estimate varies, but it is at least several thousand in every case.

Noteworthy in Table 2 is the absence of favorable impacts across the school outcomes. The average outcomes for adolescents whose parents were in the programs were no better than those for control group adolescents on any of the available school measures. Instead, for five of the outcomes, three of which measure school performance, adolescents in the program groups performed significantly worse than adolescents in the control groups.

Reports of school performance, provided in most of the studies by mothers, show the largest and most consistent unfavorable effects. The school performance impact averaged across 10 programs was –0.12 points (on a scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 5 meant "very well" and 1 meant "not well at all"), corresponding to an effect size of –0.11 — or about one-tenth of a standard deviation. Further examination of the effects on the distribution of this measure shows that the programs reduced the percentage of mothers who reported that their adolescents had above-average school performance (from 56 percent in the control groups to 52 percent in the

[35]This outcome was measured using mothers' responses to the following question: "Did your child attend a special class or special school or get special help in school for any physical, emotional, or mental condition?" Adolescents whose mothers responded affirmatively were considered to have received special educational services.

[36]For detailed impacts, see the Technical Resources for this report (Gennetian et al., 2002).

How Welfare and Work Policies for Parents Affect Adolescents

Table 2

Overview of Average Effects on Adolescent Outcomes, Across Programs

Outcome	Program Groups	Control Groups	Impact[a]	Effect Size	Standard Error of Effect Size	Number of Estimates
School performance[b]	3.58	3.71	-0.12 ***	-0.11	0.03	10
Performed below average in school (%)	16.34	14.26	2.08 *	0.06	0.03	10
Performed above average in school (%)	52.20	55.93	-3.72 ***	-0.08	0.03	10
Repeated a grade (%)	19.15	17.09	2.07 **	0.06	0.03	15
Received special educational services (%)	14.78	13.22	1.56 *	0.05	0.03	12
Suspended or expelled (%)	28.38	28.89	-0.51	-0.01	0.03	13
Dropped out (%)	9.79	9.13	0.66	0.02	0.02	16
Had or fathered a baby (%)	8.63	8.80	-0.17	-0.01	0.03	11

SOURCES: MDRC calculations based on follow-up survey data from the following studies: FTP, Jobs First, Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN, MFIP, New Hope, NEWWS, SSP, and WRP.

NOTES: In each study, adolescents were selected for inclusion in the sample on the basis of their age at random assignment (10-16 years) and their age at follow-up (12-18 years). See Table 1 for details.

Two-tailed t-tests were applied to differences between the program and control group outcomes, averaged across programs.

Statistical significance levels are indicated as: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; *** = 1 percent.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in sums and differences.

Standard errors of the impact estimates for each program were adjusted to account for shared variance between siblings.

See Appendix A for more information on the measures in this table.

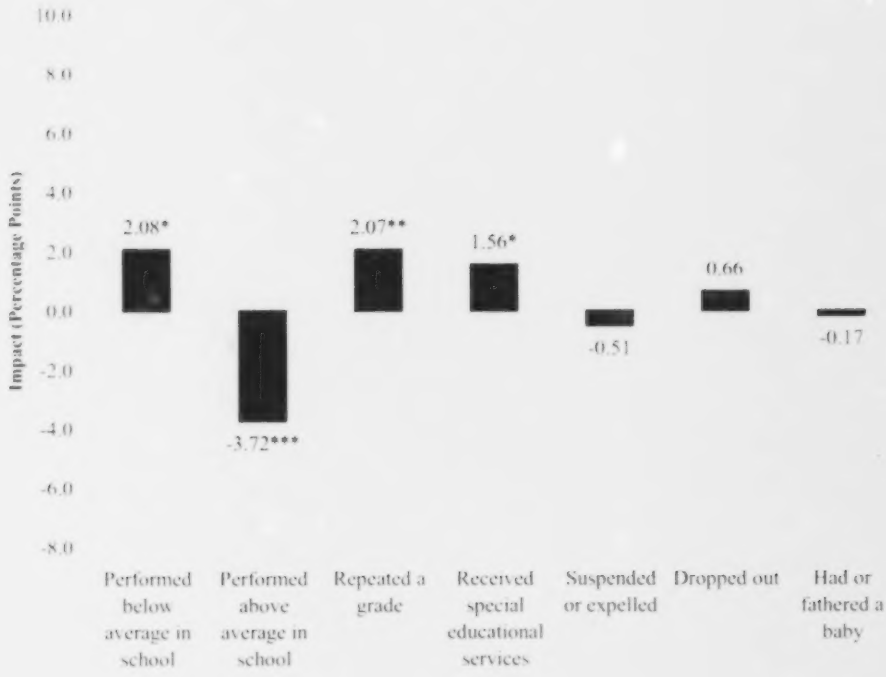
For detailed impacts on all the measures examined in each study, see Unit 1 of the Technical Resources for this report (Gennetian et al., 2002).

[a]The percentage point impact estimates shown here are calculated from the meta-analytic effect size estimates.

[b]School performance is based on a single question that asked parents to rate their adolescent children's overall school performance on a scale ranging from 1 ("not very well at all") to 5 ("very well").

Figure 1

Average Effects on Selected Adolescent Outcomes, Across Programs



SOURCES: MDRC calculations based on follow-up survey data from the following studies: FTP, Jobs First, Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN, MFIP, New Hope, NEWWS, SSP, and WRP.

NOTES: In each study, adolescents were selected for inclusion in the sample on the basis of their age at random assignment (10-16 years) and their age at follow-up (12-18 years). See Table 1 for details.

Two-tailed t-tests were applied to differences between the program and control group outcomes, averaged across programs.

Statistical significance levels are indicated as: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; *** = 1 percent.

Standard errors of the impact estimates for each program were adjusted to account for shared variance between siblings.

See Appendix A for more information on the measures in this figure.

For detailed impacts on all the measures examined in each study, see Unit 1 of the Technical Resources for this report (Gennetian et al., 2002).

The percentage point impact estimates shown here are calculated from the meta-analytic effect size estimates.

program groups) and slightly increased the percentage of mothers who reported that their adolescents had below-average school performance (from 14 percent in the control groups to 16 percent in the program groups).

Table 3 shows the overall average impacts (bottom row) and each individual program's impacts (preceding rows) on various measures of school progress.[57] Of the nine programs examined in the seven studies that measured adolescents' school performance, six lowered performance, although only three had statistically significant impacts on this outcome. To find out whether the average effect concealed differences across programs, a statistical procedure was used to test for homogeneity of effects;[58] the results of this test indicated that there is indeed a general pattern of negative impacts on adolescents' school performance (in other words, the average effect was not driven by just a couple of the programs).

The programs' average impacts on grade repetition and receipt of special educational services were also unfavorable. Table 3 shows that the impacts on grade repetition were unfavorable in nine of the 15 comparisons (three of the nine were statistically significant). The average effect size is a statistically significant 0.06, equivalent to a 2.1 percentage point increase in the percentage of adolescents who repeated a grade in the program groups relative to that in the control groups. For receipt of special services for an emotional, physical, or mental condition, the impacts were unfavorable in eight of the 12 comparisons (three of the eight were statistically significant), although in one case the impact was favorable. The overall impact had an 0.05 effect size, which corresponds to a 1.6 percentage point increase in the percentage of adolescents who were receiving special educational services in the program groups relative to that in the control groups. The results of the test for homogeneity of effects indicated that there is also a general pattern of negative impacts on grade repetition and receipt of special educational services.

In contrast, the programs did not, on average, affect the percentage of adolescents who were suspended or expelled from or dropped out of school. Nor did any of the individual programs lead to statistically significant increases in the dropout rate among 12- to 18-year-olds.[59]

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[57]For detailed impacts on all the measures examined in each study, see Unit 1 of the Technical Resources for this report (Gennetian et al., 2002).

[58]Because of the relatively small number of estimates, the power of this test (based on the Q statistic) to detect differences between impacts is relatively low; for details, see Appendix B.

[59]In some of the surveys, school dropout data were collected in two different ways. One question generally asked whether any of the parent's children in a certain age range — for instance, those aged 10 or 12 and older — had dropped out of school. Another question asked about each child's current school status and, if the child was not in school, the reasons for not being in school. For most of the studies, a child was inferred to have dropped out of school when the parent responded "currently not in school because dropped out" to the latter survey question. See Appendix A for more information.

Table 3

Average Effects on School Performance, Grade Repetition, and Receipt of Special Educational Services, by Program and Across Programs

Study	Program(s) Tested	Impact on School Performance[a]	Impact on Grade Repetition	Impact on Receipt of Special Educational Services
NEWWS				
	Atlanta LFA	--	-0.51	0.47
	Atlanta HCD	--	-0.17	-0.63
	Grand Rapids LFA	--	5.32 *	5.53 *
	Grand Rapids HCD	--	5.70 *	4.95
	Riverside LFA	--	3.56	4.12 *
	Riverside HCD	--	3.89	5.13 *
	Portland	--	-2.07	0.21
Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN	Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN	-0.04	-3.34	2.31
MFIP				
	Full MFIP for long-term recipients	0.03	-2.58	--
	Full MFIP for recent applicants	-0.36 **	5.15	--
	MFIP Incentives Only for long-term recipients	0.00	0.86	--
SSP	SSP	-0.04	1.51	-0.03
New Hope	New Hope Demonstration	-0.23	18.58 ***	-6.72 *
WRP				
	WRP Incentives Only	0.06	-1.22	2.43
	Full WRP	0.00	0.16	-1.93

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Study	Program(s) Tested	Impact on School Performance[a]	Impact on Grade Repetition	Impact on Receipt of Special Educational Services
FTP	FTP	-0.25 **	--	--
Jobs First	Jobs First	-0.28 ***	--	--
All	**All (average)**	**-0.12 *** **	**2.07 ** **	**1.56 * **

SOURCES: MDRC calculations based on follow-up survey data from the following studies: FTP, Jobs First, Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN, MFIP, New Hope, NEWWS, SSP, and WRP.

NOTES: In each study, adolescents were selected for inclusion in the sample on the basis of their age at random assignment (10-16 years) and their age at follow-up (12-18 years). See Table 1 for details.

Two-tailed t-tests were applied to differences between the program and control group outcomes, averaged across programs.

Statistical significance levels are indicated as: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; *** = 1 percent.

Standard errors of the impact estimates for each program were adjusted to account for shared variance between siblings.

The percentage point impact estimates shown here are calculated from the meta-analytic effect size estimates.

"--" indicates that the outcome was not measured in this study.

See Appendix A for more information on the measures in this table.

For detailed impacts on all the measures examined in each study, see Unit 1 of the Technical Resources for this report (Gennetian et al., 2002).

[a]School performance is based on a single question that asked parents to rate their adolescent children's overall school performance on a scale ranging from 1 ("not very well at all") to 5 ("very well").

Only one out of 13 programs increased the rate of suspensions.[40]

Table 2 also summarizes the evidence on teen parenting, an important behavioral indicator that was measured in more than half of the program evaluations by asking mothers whether their adolescents had had or fathered a baby. In contrast to the patterns that emerged for some of the school outcomes, the evidence here is neither negative nor positive. Rates of teen parenting — a behavior outcome explicitly targeted for reduction in the 1996 welfare reform legislation — were similar for adolescents in the program and control groups.[41]

When possible, the program effects were analyzed for male versus female adolescents and for younger versus older adolescents (aged 10 to 13 versus 14 to 16 at study entry). (Some studies did not collect information about children's gender, and, in some studies, it was not possible to isolate effects on younger versus older adolescents).[42] Although there was no clear pattern of negative effects across the measured outcomes, the gender and age subgroup results revealed a few notable differences.[43] Whereas the programs had no effect on grade repetition for female adolescents, they decreased grade repetition among male adolescents, and the difference between the two impacts was statistically significant. For the age subgroups, the effects differed by outcome. Among younger adolescents, the programs lowered average school performance and increased grade repetition and receipt of special education services. Among older adolescents, the programs likewise had some unfavorable effects, but their size and the specific outcomes affected were different. Older adolescents in the program groups were more likely to be suspended or expelled and to drop out than were older adolescents in the control groups, and the differences between these impacts and those on the younger subgroup were statistically significant.[44] However, older adolescents were less likely than their control group counterparts to receive special educational services. Interestingly, as discussed in the next section, there were no effects on the rates of suspension or expulsion or dropping out among older adolescents who were young adults (aged 19 to 23) at the time of the follow-up survey. Further work is needed to elucidate the variation in program impacts on children of different ages.

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[40]For details, see Unit 1 of the Technical Resources for this report (Gennetian et al., 2002).

[41]As described in Appendix A, teen parenting was measured by asking mothers whether their child had given birth to or fathered a child.

[42]For example, because NEWWS had a five-year follow-up period, it examined only adolescents who were 10 to 13 at study entry (15 to 18 at follow-up). As a result, the effects presented by gender and age do not reflect all the studies that are represented in the full sample estimates in Table 2.

[43]See Units 2 and 3 of the Technical Resources for this report (Gennetian et al., 2002).

[44]Recall that many more programs were included in the calculation of the meta-analytic averages for younger adolescents than for older adolescents because of the long follow-up period in some of the studies (such as NEWWS) and the age criteria for the analysis. As a result, information about suspensions and expulsions for older adolescents was available for only four programs and about dropping out for only seven programs.

Because so few studies collected information on other behavioral measures, their effects were not averaged or presented in Table 2 or Figure 1. Of the six programs for which information about school behavior is available, two (MFIP Incentives Only for long-term recipients and Full MFIP for recent applicants) led to a statistically significant effect, namely, an increase in school behavior problems. The only program for which information about delinquent behavior and substance use is available (SSP) increased the frequency of minor delinquent activity (such as skipping school) and drinking once a week or more[45] and had no effects on major delinquent behavior such as drug use and use of weapons. However, as will be discussed below, these effects did not appear to translate into negative outcomes at a later follow-up point. Finally, of the three programs for which information about police involvement is available, one (WRP Incentives Only) increased involvement with the police.

In summary, there are worrisome detrimental impacts on some, but by no means all, of the adolescent outcomes measured in these studies. The negative effects on school outcomes are the most consistent. The sizes of the average effects are small, however, and many of the individual programs did not produce statistically significant impacts. The largest detrimental impact — one-tenth of a standard deviation — was on maternal reports of school performance.[46]

Do any of the negative effects on school outcomes warrant attention from policymakers? As discussed earlier, adolescents in the program group scored .12 points (on a scale from 1 to 5) lower than control group adolescents on maternal reports of school performance. To put this effect size in perspective, an equivalent change in achievement test scores for adolescents in the control group who scored at the 25th percentile would place adolescents in the program group at the 21st percentile. The impacts on rates of grade repetition and receipt of special educational services are considerably smaller than this, each having been increased by roughly 2 percentage points by the programs relative to control group levels. However, because the effects on adolescent outcomes are not consistent across outcomes and do not seem to have led, for example, to higher rates of unfavorable outcomes such as school dropout or teen parenting, they are better seen as calling for more investigation than for an immediate policy response.

At the same time, the more that is understood both about the reasons for these negative effects and their long-term implications for adolescents' transitions into adulthood, the clearer the road map will be for further research and future policy. Based on the results presented

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[45] For further discussion of these effects, see Morris and Michalopoulos, 2000.

[46] The following observation should help assuage fears that this impact is due to a bias in maternal reports. Several of the programs had positive impacts on younger children's school performances as measured by maternal reports (Morris et al., 2001). For the negative effects on adolescents' school performance discussed here to have been caused by reporting bias, program group mothers therefore would have had to be biased not only relative to control group mothers but in different directions in reporting the school performance of their younger as opposed to their older children.

above, it is possible that there will be negative repercussions as adolescents move toward adulthood. Alternatively, some of these effects could have positive long-term results. Decreases in adolescents' school progress, for example, could be a short-term side effect of moves to higher-income neighborhoods or higher-quality schools. As programs increase family income, mothers may invest in higher-quality, more competitive schools for their children; their children's academic performance may worsen in the short run but benefit in the long run. Similarly, an increase in receipt of special educational services could signal an increase in adolescents' behavior or learning problems or, alternatively, an increase in mothers' awareness about or access to resources available in the community to meet their adolescents' needs.

Clearly, understanding the reasons for and the long-term implications of the effects of welfare and work policies on adolescents will be critical to formulating a policy response. The next subsection addresses the latter issue using the few available long-term follow-up data on adolescent outcomes.

Effects on Adolescents Entering Young Adulthood

It is difficult to predict how children's transition from adolescence to young adulthood will be affected by the small declines in school performance and the small rises in grade repetition — both outcomes that may influence school completion — observed in the studies reviewed here. Any adverse effect on school performance is troubling, particularly when it is experienced by children who as a group are already faring poorly. It is important to find out to what extent these negative effects persist, since transitory impacts would be of less concern than permanent changes in the trajectory into adulthood.

With one exception, the studies did not measure outcomes for adolescents in the present sample (who were 10 to 16 years old at study entry) at more than one follow-up point. This exception, the SSP evaluation (which measured adolescent outcomes 36 months and 54 months after study entry), as well as NEWWS (which measured adolescent outcomes five years after study entry) provide some evidence on the effects of parents' participation in welfare and work programs on teens who became young adults during the follow-up period. For the purposes of this analysis, teens were defined as children who were 14 to 18 years old at study entry and therefore about 19 to 23 years old at the long-term follow-up point. The outcomes measured for this group in both studies include teen parenting, suspensions from school, and dropping out of school. In addition, the SSP study collected information about attending university or college, working, and being arrested.

No effects on school completion were found for teens who were 19 to 21 at follow-up or for those who were 22 to 23 at follow-up in either of these studies. The programs' effects on teen parenting were more mixed. Whereas one of the seven NEWWS programs (Riverside

(HCD) increased parenting among adolescents who were 14 to 16 at study entry, two other NEWWS programs (Atlanta LFA and Riverside HCD) decreased this outcome among adolescents who were 17 to 18 at study entry. Of the 10 outcomes examined in SSP's 54-month follow-up interviews, only teen parenting showed a statistically significant increase.[47]

The only study that gathered data directly from adolescents at two points (36 months and 54 months) after their parents' entry into the study, SSP also provides evidence on the duration of adolescent impacts for the age group examined in the previous section. For children aged 16 to 18 at the 36-month point, SSP increased rates of engaging in minor delinquent behavior and alcohol use. Four-and-a-half years after study entry, however, the adolescent outcomes measured — high school completion, drug use, and employment — did not differ between the program and control groups.[48]

These strands of evidence on adolescents' transitions into early adulthood suggest that welfare and employment programs directed at parents have few long-term impacts on older teen children, and the few effects (on teen parenting) found are mixed in direction. For conclusions to be drawn with any confidence, however, studies with longer follow-up periods and a broader range of measures (including, for instance, employment stability and poverty status) need to be conducted.

Why Do Welfare and Work Policies Affect Adolescents' School Outcomes?

The policies examined in this synthesis were designed to affect families' economic circumstances, including parental employment and earnings, total household income, and welfare receipt. Through their impacts on family resources and coping strategies (such as parenting), these policies may affect adolescents' development, ultimately influencing their academic and behavioral functioning. The rest of this document focuses on why.

None of the studies were designed to trace the chain of potential effects all the way from policies to parents' and families' economic outcomes to adolescents' environments to adolescents' well-being. In fact, because adolescents' lives were not a focus of these evaluations, only a few of the studies provide any information about how adolescents' environments may have changed as a result of the specific program approaches. Nevertheless, comparisons of the results across programs and program approaches, which are interspersed with ethnographic interview data throughout the rest of the section, offer one way to explore the pathways that may

[47] Michalopoulos et al., 2002.

[48] See Michalopoulos et al., 2002. Another experimental study — the New Hope Project in Milwaukee — will also provide longer-term follow-up data on adolescents.

have led to the observed effects. It is important to bear in mind, however, that these comparisons are nonexperimental. In other words, it is possible that differences between program impacts can be explained by factors other than a particular program or program approach (for instance, by differences between the sites or the populations included in the studies).

Do the effects depend on the policy approach?

The studies examined here were designed to test three key policies — mandatory employment services, earnings supplements, and time limits — alone or in combination. By calculating the average effects on adolescents by type of program, one can explore whether, on average, the approaches influenced adolescents differently. As shown in an earlier research synthesis from the Next Generation project,[49] the approaches had differential effects on elementary school-aged children: Whereas earnings supplement programs generally benefited their cognitive development, parents' participation in mandatory employment services generally had no effect on their cognitive developmental outcomes.

Figure 2 shows the programs' impacts on adolescents' school performance, grade repetition, receipt of special educational services, and rate of dropping out, each split by program type. The programs with mandatory employment services are the seven programs tested in NEWWS and Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN. The earnings supplement programs are Minnesota's Full MFIP and MFIP Incentives Only programs, Canada's SSP, and Milwaukee's New Hope Project. The time-limited programs are Connecticut's Jobs First and Florida's Family Transition Program (FTP). Vermont's WRP was excluded from these analyses because it could not be clearly categorized on the basis of the three key policy features. While each type of program had some negative effects on adolescents, the specific outcomes affected vary. The programs with earnings supplements led to higher rates of dropping out of school and grade repetition; the programs with mandatory employment services increased receipt of special educational services and grade repetition; and the programs with time limits markedly worsened school outcomes, increasing the percentage of adolescents who performed below average in school and the percentage who were suspended or expelled.[50] It is not surprising that each program type showed some evidence of having negative effects on adolescents, since effects on school performance or grade repetition were found for some individual programs of each type.

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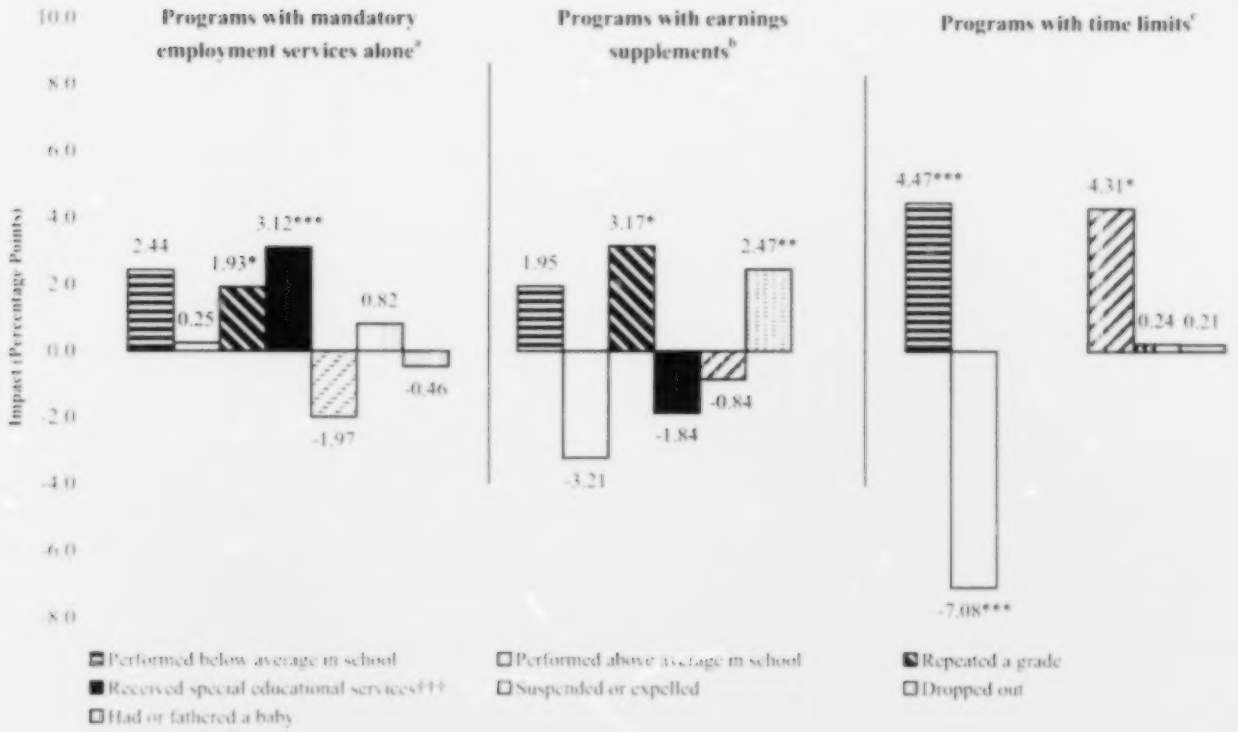
[49]Morris et al., 2001.

[50]Information on receipt of special educational services and grade repetition was not available for the two time-limited welfare programs.

Figure 2

Average Effects on Selected Adolescent Outcomes, by Key Policy Feature



(continued)

Figure 2 (continued)

SOURCES: MDRC calculations based on follow-up survey data from the following studies: FTP, Jobs First, Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN, MFIP, New Hope, NEWWS, and SSP.

NOTES: In each study, adolescents were selected for inclusion in the sample on the basis of their age at random assignment (10-16 years) and their age at follow-up (12-18 years). See Table 1 for details.

WRP was excluded from this analysis because it cannot be clearly categorized on the basis of the three key policy features.

Two-tailed t-tests were applied to differences between the program and control group outcomes, averaged across programs. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; *** = 1 percent.

Chi-square tests were applied to differences between the impacts of the three types of programs. For the three measures for which data were available for only two of the three program types, two-tailed t-tests were applied to differences between impacts. Statistical significance levels are indicated next to the outcome labels as: † = 10 percent; †† = 5 percent; ††† = 1 percent.

Standard errors of the impact estimates for each program were adjusted to account for shared variance between siblings.

See Appendix A for more information on the measures in this figure.

For detailed impacts on all the measures examined in each study, see Unit 1 of the Technical Resources for this report (Gennetian et al., 2002).

[a]The programs with mandatory employment services alone are all the NEWWS programs and Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN.

[b]The programs with earnings supplements are SSP, New Hope, Full MFIP, and MFIP Incentives Only.

[c]The programs with time limits are Jobs First and FTP.

These patterns suggest that the programs' detrimental effects on adolescents' school outcomes cannot be traced to any particular one of the policy features examined here.[51] At least some programs with each feature — those that mandated work or participation in work activities, those that supplemented earnings, and those that imposed welfare time limits — had at least some negative effects on adolescents' school outcomes. It is interesting, however, that there was more consistency in specific effects within than across program types: although all the effects found concerned school outcomes, the programs that shared a policy approach tended to affect the same subset of school outcomes. This is a potential topic for further work.

Do the effects depend on changes in maternal employment?

Because negative effects on adolescents' school outcomes appear across program approaches, it seems likely that the effects arise from an impact on families caused by all the program approaches. Since the common goal was to raise maternal employment — and most of the programs succeeded in doing so — changes in employment levels likely drove the effects on adolescents. One way to find out whether this is true is to compare the variation in the programs' impacts on maternal employment with the variation in their impacts on adolescent outcomes. If negative effects are concentrated among programs that substantially increased employment, then maternal employment probably played an important role.

Increases in maternal employment could hurt adolescents in a number of ways. Most obvious, working parents may have less time and energy to spend with their children or to monitor their children's behavior than they would if they did not work. Parental employment may also increase the responsibilities of adolescents, especially responsibilities related to providing child care to their younger siblings. This may have benefits such as keeping them out of trouble but may also interfere with their schoolwork. From a developmental perspective, adolescence is a period during which youth form and cement their identities and make important decisions about their future. From the perspective of both the adolescent and the single mother, it may be a particularly difficult time for the mother to start a new job that likely affords her little control over time off or work hours.

To assess whether the programs' impacts on adolescents are associated with their economic effects on families, measures were constructed to make various aspects of parental employment comparable across studies. Employment was measured using administrative records from the unemployment insurance system in the states in which the eight studies under examination were conducted. (The records do not include self-employment, employment in the in-

[51] Only one cross-approach difference between impacts was statistically significant: Whereas the programs with mandatory employment services increased receipt of special educational services, the earnings supplement programs had no effect on this outcome.

formal sector, or employment outside the state in which the study occurred.) The programs were sorted by their impacts on employment and employment-related services, so that the impacts on adolescents for programs that increased parental employment or participation in employment-related services could be compared with those for programs that did not.[52]

Most of the programs examined in this synthesis increased employment or participation in employment-related services.[53] On average, the programs also produced unfavorable effects on some adolescents' school outcomes. However, as shown in Table 3, the magnitudes of the unfavorable effects on school outcomes are very small for some programs, and, in some cases, there were no effects on school outcomes. In fact, even some of the programs that increased full-time employment among parents — such as Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN — produced no effects on measures of adolescents' school progress, while two of the three programs that had smaller effects on employment — FTP and Full MFIP for recent applicants — nonetheless affected adolescents negatively.[54] Moreover, none of the effects on any given adolescent outcome could be directly linked to programs that increased employment during every year of the follow-up period until adolescent outcomes were measured or to programs that had employment effects that were less extensive or restricted to the very early phase of the follow-up period.

In sum, nonexperimental research has revealed a relationship between program effects on maternal employment and program effects on adolescent outcomes, but the relationship does not seem to depend directly on the duration, extent, or timing of employment impacts as measured in the present studies. Why? One possibility is that job schedules, an aspect of employment that was not well measured in these studies, are important. Another explanation is raised in the ethnographic interviews: Employment poses new difficulties for parents and their children but also brings some benefits, and the balance between the two may depend on how the program is implemented, the circumstances of individual families, the community context, and other factors. In ethnographic interviews, parents often stated the belief that their employment benefited their older children, both because they felt they were setting a good example and because they felt better about themselves for being employed.[55] However, parents — sometimes the very same ones — acknowledged that they spent less time interacting or supervising their adolescent children after becoming employed. Parents who go to work or work longer hours in response to

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[52]For the effects of these programs on selected employment outcomes, see Unit 5 of the Technical Resources for this report (Gennetian et al., 2002).

[53]Two of the 16 programs — the Atlanta Labor Force Attachment (LFA) program studied in NEWWS and WRP Incentives Only — slightly decreased employment during part of the follow-up period.

[54]FTP increased participation in employment-related activities such as job search and training programs, which could have some of the same effects on recipients' children as working at a job. And MFIP increased the proportion of recent applicants who were currently employed.

[55]Scott et al., 2001; London et al., 2001.

welfare reform policies may no longer have time to help with homework or to attend parent-teacher conferences and may lose touch with their children's academic progress, teachers, and schools.[56] These changes may be especially critical for adolescents, who are more likely to skip school and to engage in high-risk activities in the absence of parental monitoring. The case of Becky and her daughter provides a particularly vivid example of not only such problems but also a mother's struggle to balance her personal needs for achievement with the demands of parenting (Box 1).

What other family changes might influence the effects of maternal employment on adolescent children?

Clearly, factors other than maternal employment must be contributing to the impacts that the program interventions had on adolescents. This section examines how increases in employment might play out differently in different families or in different program models, possibly leading to variations in adolescent effects. As discussed earlier, published reports from the individual studies examined here, as well as the broader research literature, suggest that adolescent outcomes can be influenced by family income, supervision and monitoring by adults, adolescents' taking on increasingly adult roles, and other areas of family life. Some of the effects are direct; for instance, programs with earnings supplements have been found to increase family income. Others are indirect; for instance, programs that increase employment have been found to increase preadolescent children's participation in child care.[57] Even though the studies examined in this synthesis were not explicitly designed to measure multiple aspects of adolescents' lives, at least some of them afford data shedding light on each of these possibilities.[58]

Income. The earnings gains caused by the programs did not necessarily lead to gains in income for the families of adolescents. Programs that offered generous earning supplements generally raised income, while those that provided no financial work incentives left family income unchanged or, in the case of one program, lower.

If used to pay for tutoring, out-of-school care, or relocation to a better neighborhood, income gains could help mitigate the potentially damaging effects of maternal employment. By the same reasoning, income losses could exacerbate some of the problems arising from maternal employment (such as lack of adult supervision or pressure on adolescents to work for pay) or even have direct adverse effects on school outcomes — for instance, if adolescents must go without school-related supplies or activities that promote academic achievement.

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[56] Kurz, 2002.

[57] Crosby, Gennetian, and Huston, 2001.

[58] For other possible explanations, see Brooks et al. (2001).

Box 1

A Mother Juggles Her Aspirations to Work with a Need to Supervise Her Rebellious Daughter

Becky, a 40-year-old white single mother with one child, 15-year-old Jill, hoped to take computer courses and had recently begun applying for jobs when she was first interviewed for the Urban Change study in Philadelphia. But when Jill started "going haywire," Becky felt that keeping her daughter safe was her priority. According to Becky, Jill ran with the wrong crowd, skipped school, and stayed away from home for days at a time. She believed her daughter's problems undermined her chances of keeping a job: "It is really hard to go out and work when your daughter is going [down] the wrong path. No employer is going to want somebody on the job when they are getting phone calls all day to come home or you got to get home. I mean, I will be fired like that." She looked to the police and other authorities for help with Jill, but the only assistance she found was from a support group for parents facing difficult situations with their own children.

Within two months of the initial interview, Becky took a cleaning job, but she was soon forced to quit because working all night and dealing with Jill's problems all day left her exhausted. A year later, she had secured work as a babysitter, but her cash assistance and medical benefits were cut off — a consequence, she says, of her daughter's delinquency: "I was telling my caseworker about my babysitting and how it was good that it was so close by. . . . I said that I was having trouble with my daughter going to school. Well, she goes and cuts my welfare because she [my daughter] is missing school." With help from a support group, Becky rearranged her commitments to work and caring for Jill, and she tried to set limits with her daughter. She told the interviewer: "If she wants to come in this house, then she has to follow the rules. That's it." Eventually, Becky found paid employment in a nursing home. When asked whether she could think of any reason why she might leave her job, she said: "Only if my daughter . . . don't wise the hell up and something pulls me away that she gets in trouble or something. That would be the only way."

Reflecting back on the past three years during her final interview, Becky said that she thought Jill's rebelliousness was a show of independence and concluded that her working had probably not affected her daughter's behavior. She had thought that Jill was of an age where Becky's working would have relatively little impact except to make her less available to monitor her daughter. In fact, her daughter's behaviors undermined Becky's ability to focus on her job because she was spending time and effort trying to chase Jill down.

To examine whether income influences the effects of employment on adolescents, a similar strategy to that described for the employment analysis above was used. Programs were sorted by whether they had effects on parental income, which was measured using administrative data and reflects welfare payments, Food Stamps, earnings, and earnings supplements (where applicable) combined.[59] Figure 3 shows the effects on school outcomes — averaged using meta-analytic techniques — separately for programs that increased income during the follow-up period or some part of it[60] and for programs that did not increase income at all (including one that actually decreased income).

The results do not give any clear indication that effects on adolescent outcomes vary systematically with effects on income. In other words, the impacts on adolescent outcomes of the programs that increased income are very similar in magnitude to (and not statistically different from) those of the programs that did not increase income. However, with the exception of a statistically significant increase in the rate of dropping out, many of the unfavorable effects that were observed were clustered among the programs that did not increase income. These programs reduced the proportion of adolescents who performed above average in school and increased their rates of grade repetition and receipt of special educational services. Thus, there is weak evidence suggesting that increased employment, when accompanied by increased income, plays a role in protecting adolescents from harmful effects of maternal employment. The lack of a more distinct pattern might be accounted for by either of the following explanations, both of which merit further examination: (1) The income increases achieved by these programs were not large enough to improve adolescent outcomes or even to fully buffer adolescents from negative effects; or (2) negative effects on adolescents are not worsened by unchanged or even decreased income.

Supervision, monitoring, and structured activities. When parents go to work — or increase their hours of work — they have less time for parenting. Supervision and monitoring are important during school hours, when parents may encourage school attendance and help adolescents stay engaged in positive activities and avoid risk-taking behavior. Closer parental monitoring of adolescents has been linked to better school outcomes and social functioning,[61] and less parental monitoring has been linked to increases in problem behavior[62] and juvenile

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[59]For the impacts on income across programs, see Unit 5 of the Technical Resources for this report (Gennetian et al., 2002).

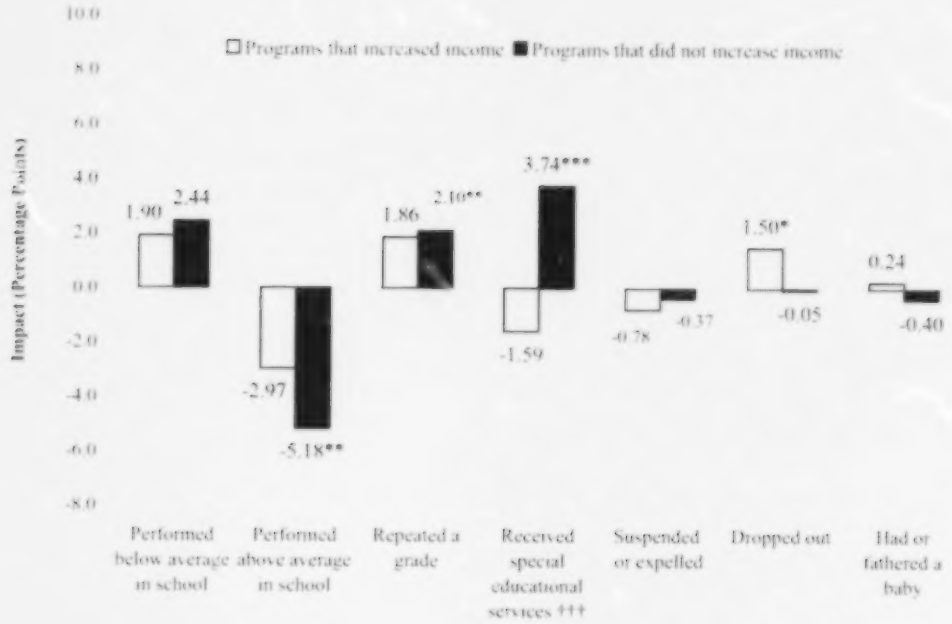
[60]The Atlanta Human Capital Development (HCD) program in NEWWS, the New Hope Project, and Full WRP did not increase cumulative income when computed for the follow-up period as a whole but did so when it was computed for part of the follow-up period.

[61]Linver and Silverberg, 1997; Baumrind, 1989.

[62]Mason, Cauce, Gonzales, and Hirage, 1996.

Figure 3

Average Effects on Selected Adolescent Outcomes, by Program Effect on Parental Income



SOURCES: MDRC calculations based on follow-up survey data from the following studies: FTP, Jobs First, Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN, MFIP, New Hope, NEWWS, SSP, and WRP.

NOTES: In each study, adolescents were selected for inclusion in the sample on the basis of their age at random assignment (10-16 years) and their age at follow-up (12-18 years). See Table 1 for details.

Two-tailed t-tests were applied to differences between the program and control group outcomes, averaged across programs. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: * = 10 percent, ** = 5 percent, *** = 1 percent.

Two-tailed t-tests were applied to differences between the impacts of the programs that increased income and those that did not increase income. Statistical significance levels are indicated next to the outcome labels as: † = 10 percent; †† = 5 percent; ††† = 1 percent.

Standard errors of the impact estimates for each program were adjusted to account for shared variance between siblings.

See Appendix A for more information on the measures in this figure.

For detailed impacts on all the measures examined in each study, see Unit 1 of the Technical Resources for this report (Gennetian et al., 2002).

The programs that increased income are Jobs First, Full MFIP for long-term recipients, MFIP Incentives Only for long-term recipients, New Hope, Atlanta HCD (NEWWS), SSP, and Full WRP.

The programs that did not increase income are FTP, Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN, Full MFIP for recent applicants, Atlanta LFA (NEWWS), Grand Rapids LFA (NEWWS), Grand Rapids HCD (NEWWS), Riverside LFA (NEWWS), Riverside HCD (NEWWS), Portland (NEWWS), and WRP Incentives Only.

crime.[63] The case of Eileen illustrates the processes that might underlie changes in parenting and adolescent behavior in the wake of a mother's entry into employment (Box 2).

Measures of some important aspects of supervision — for example, generally knowing about their children's whereabouts during the day, including whom they are spending time with — were not measured for adolescents in these studies. However, for five of the 16 programs, information is available about the extent of adolescents' supervision by adults, that is, whether they received any out-of-school care or participated in structured extracurricular activities.[64] Two of these programs increased maternal employment or participation in employment-related activities and had negative effects on adolescents' school outcomes. In both cases, there was no evidence that program group adolescents participated in sports or other structured out-of-school activities at higher rates than their control group counterparts. In other words, their mothers were working more, but no structured activities took place of maternal supervision in the afternoon. (In contrast, for younger children, increases in maternal employment were typically accompanied by increases in the use of paid center care.) One of the two programs increased the use of child care provided by relatives, primarily grandmothers. It is an interesting question how care provided by relatives other than parents and care provided by after-school care providers differ from parental care with respect to monitoring, supervision, and structure. Two of the five programs increased maternal employment and had no effect on adolescents' school outcomes. One of them did not change adolescents' likelihood of receiving supervised care or participating in out-of-school activities but did somewhat increase the number of hours they spent in care, while the other led to a decrease in adolescents' participation in sports. The fifth program had no effect on parental employment or adolescent outcomes.

In summary, these findings suggest that, according to the measures available, adolescents' levels of participation in out-of-school care and structured activities did not change very much or in any consistent way with the increase in their mothers' employment. It is possible that a larger increase in such participation, particularly in a high-quality arrangement or activity, could have prevented some of the negative effects on adolescents that were observed.

Assuming adult roles and responsibilities. In addition to curbing opportunities for parents to monitor their children's activities and help them with schoolwork, spending less time at home may lead parents to expect adolescents to take on new "adult" tasks, such as caring for younger siblings, doing housework, shopping, cooking, or contributing to family income by working outside the home. Nonexperimental research has found that 14- to 17-year-olds in families where parents have recently left welfare for work are more likely to work than are teens

[63] Patterson, 1999.

[64] For the effects of these programs on adolescent out-of-school care and participation in extracurricular activities, see Unit 5 of the Technical Resources for this report (Gennetian et al., 2002).

Box 2

A Mother's Stress from Work Breeds Resentment and Problem Behavior in Her Adolescents

Eileen, a white mother of six children living in Philadelphia, worried that the demands of work would not leave her with enough time to supervise her children. Eileen had cycled through a wide variety of jobs, including housecleaning, delivering pizza, babysitting, and factory work. When first interviewed, she said she wanted to participate in the training programs mandated by welfare reform but worried about how this might conflict with her children's needs: "I mean, I want to go through programs, but it takes so much time, and I don't have time when it comes to raising my kids. You know what I'm saying? So like, I'm caught in a . . . mix, like where it's very hard to balance two things at one time." It was not much later, however, that Eileen started working full time at a local Laundromat for $5.15 per hour and part time at a Dunkin' Donuts nearby for $4.75 per hour.

As work demands absorbed more and more of Eileen's time, two of her children began to act in an abusive manner toward her. Her 12-year-old daughter, Mary, particularly, frequently punched her hard enough to raise bruises. "My arms are, like, sore," Eileen said. "She punches on me big time. I have marks all over me. I still got some on my legs. I'd never thought I'd see my kids beat me up. And it's not that I'm being mean with them, it's, like, they have to understand my situation. They don't want to hear it." Eileen said her children would yell at her about never being home with them. Like her children, Eileen attributed the chaos at home to her work schedule: "It's just that I can't be in two places at one time. . . . I've been working a lot. I've been like working from twelve to ten at night. And by the time I get — go to home, I mean, it's, like, ten-thirty at night, and by the time, I . . . grab something to eat. I'm just so tired! I mean they have to realize . . . I work my butt."

Apart from some occasional help provided by an older son who did not live with her, Eileen did not feel she had anyone she could turn to for support. Public agencies were as likely as not to add to her pressures. The welfare office had cut off her cash assistance, Food Stamps, and Medicaid for two months because of paperwork problems and an altercation with her caseworker. Eileen was also once required to appear in court to explain Mary's truancy from school. She called on the local child welfare agency, but she thought that the caseworkers there criticized her parenting too much and made suggestions that were incompatible with the work requirements imposed by welfare reform. She told them: "I don't want youse coming in here telling me I don't prepare my food, or I'm never home. I'm working, I think more of my job, or, or, or telling me that I don't make my beds right." Asked how the caseworkers responded when she explained she couldn't be home much because she had to work to support her kids, Eileen said: "Well, that's a natural cause, but you still have to be with your children. . . . [They suggest that I] spread my time a little bit more. And I don't know how I can do that. I'm really stressed out."

in welfare-reliant families and also work longer hours than teens in other income categories.[65] The assumption of adult roles by adolescents could lead to increased responsibility and better behavior, or it could lead to resentment, acting out, failure to complete unsupervised tasks (such as homework), and resistance to any kind of control imposed by an adult.[66]

Home responsibilities. The case of Tina and her daughter, which was described in the section on qualitative findings, illustrates how time pressures on a parent can force an adolescent child to take on more child care responsibilities and in turn affect the child's school attendance. The case of Lisa (Box 3), however, shows that greater responsibilities need not hinder the academic progress of the children who assume them.

Quantitative analyses provide some evidence that the programs that increased maternal employment and had negative effects on adolescents' school outcomes were the same programs that increased adolescents' home responsibilities. Although most of the studies did not collect detailed information about older children's chores and other responsibilities, three studies did collect child care information for a subset of families who had elementary school-aged children. It is possible to examine whether welfare and work policies increased the proportion of adolescents in these families who were responsible for caring for their elementary school-aged siblings. Rates of sibling care — that is, care of an elementary school-aged child by an adolescent sibling (among families who had at least one child in both age groups) — in these three studies ranged from 14 percent to 28 percent at the time of the survey, with the adolescent being the primary source of care in 7 percent to 19 percent of cases. The majority of adolescents who provided sibling care were female (50 percent to 80 percent) and ranged in age from 14 to 18. On average, adolescents cared for their elementary school-aged siblings roughly 10 hours per week or less. In the two programs that increased maternal employment and participation in employment-related activities and negatively affected adolescents' school outcomes, elementary school-aged children in the program group were more likely than their control group counterparts to be cared for by an older sibling, suggesting that adolescents did take on some of the child care responsibilities in the home.[67] Furthermore, adolescents whose parents were in the third program, which did not adversely affect adolescents' school outcomes, were no more likely than their control group counterparts to care for their younger siblings.

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[65]Brown, 2001.

[66]Burton, Brooks, and Clark, 2002; Grusec, Goodnow, and Cohen, 1996.

[67]For impacts on care of elementary school-aged children by adolescent siblings, see Unit 5 of the Technical Resources for this report (Gennetian et al., 2002). In brief, FTP increased the percentage of families who ever used sibling care during the follow-up period and during the month before the follow-up interview, and Jobs First increased use of sibling care during the month before the interview by 5.7 percentage points — a nearly statistically significant effect.

Box 3

Family Pressures Set Teen Sisters on Different Paths

When first interviewed, Lisa, a 31-year-old African-American mother of six living in Philadelphia, was addicted to crack and had none of her children living with her. Lisa's two oldest daughters, Tasha and Brianna, were living with her mother, and the four younger children were in foster care. Lisa was married to, but not living with, the father of her five youngest children, who was employed fairly steadily as a truck driver. When Lisa entered the Urban Change study, Tasha, 13, and Brianna, 12, were aware of their mother's addiction. They both did very well in school, regularly making the honor roll.

Within a year of entering the study, Lisa had checked herself into a drug rehabilitation program and kicked her crack habit. Her decision to get clean was motivated not only by the new training programs and work supports associated with welfare reform but also by her fear of losing her children permanently as a result of the Adoption and Safe Families Act, which placed limits on how long children could be in foster care. Lisa began volunteering at a church food pantry, and, with the support of the church pastor and her husband, whom she moved back in with, got her life back on track. Tasha and then Brianna moved back into the household. Lisa earned money from a variety of odd jobs while attending a job search program. Eventually, she became a certified nursing assistant and found a full-time position at a nursing home.

At the time of Lisa's last interview, her four youngest children had been placed back into her home, and the family developed daily routines for getting to school and work. Tasha and Brianna were expected to help the youngest children finish breakfast and ready themselves for school. Brianna was responsible for taking them to a neighbor's house so they could walk to school with the neighbor's children. But Lisa confessed that she had misgivings about leaving the younger children in Brianna's care, saying, "I don't know what kind of anger she has and might take out on them."

Tasha continued to follow a successful path throughout high school. She participated in a college readiness program, and she took part in a paid apprenticeship program tutoring younger children and visiting residents at a nursing home. Lisa expressed pride in her oldest daughter's accomplishments. As Tasha looked at colleges, she considered going to a nearby university because she wanted to remain with her mother and help out with the kids.

Brianna, in contrast, had a difficult time adjusting to the move back home and having to take on additional responsibilities. She expressed hostility toward her younger siblings, and after school she would often stay out until her curfew without letting anyone know where she was. During the last interview, Lisa reported that Brianna had tested into a magnet high school but was failing several classes and had not actively sought tutoring help.

If additional home responsibilities, particularly sibling care, are a primary route by which the programs adversely affected adolescents' school outcomes, then the effects should be most pronounced for those adolescents who have younger siblings. Although, on average, control group adolescents who had younger siblings at study entry fared similarly on most of the school outcomes and teen parenting as did control group adolescents who had no younger siblings at study entry, the detrimental effects of the programs were indeed larger and more consistent across outcomes in the former group than the latter — as shown in Figure 4.[68] Among adolescents with younger siblings, the programs reduced the percentage who performed above average in school and increased the percentages who received special educational services, were suspended, and dropped out of school. Among adolescents who did not have younger siblings, in contrast, the programs had no effect on receipt of special educational services or dropping out and actually decreased the rate of suspension by nearly 7 percentage points.[69] The exception to this pattern was grade repetition: The programs increased grade repetition among adolescents without younger siblings but had no effect on this outcome among adolescents with younger siblings.[70]

The reasons why adolescents without younger siblings fared better may be complex. Adolescents without younger siblings not only do not have the potential caretaking responsibility but, more generally, do not have to share family resources with as many siblings. As previously discussed, the programs examined here did not generally increase adolescents' participation in supervised activities. When impacts are examined separately for those with and without younger siblings, two of the four programs with the appropriate data increased the percentage of adolescents without younger siblings who received supervised care (for instance, in an after-school program),[71] even though the rates at which adolescents in the control groups received such care were roughly similar for the two subgroups. These two programs also had no effect on the latter group's school outcomes, and one actually decreased some aspects of minor delinquent behavior in the same subgroup. The fact that adolescents without younger siblings were necessarily the youngest child in the family or the only child in the household appears to have enabled them to participate in more structured, monitored activities after school, which might have helped mitigate negative effects of increased parental employment. They may have participated in these structured settings more because they were not needed at home or because their parents, with no younger children in the home, could invest more of their time and financial resources in their adolescent children's activities. Note that the latter hypothesis is also con-

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[68]For detailed impacts, see Unit 4 of the Technical Resources for this report (Gennetian et al., 2002).

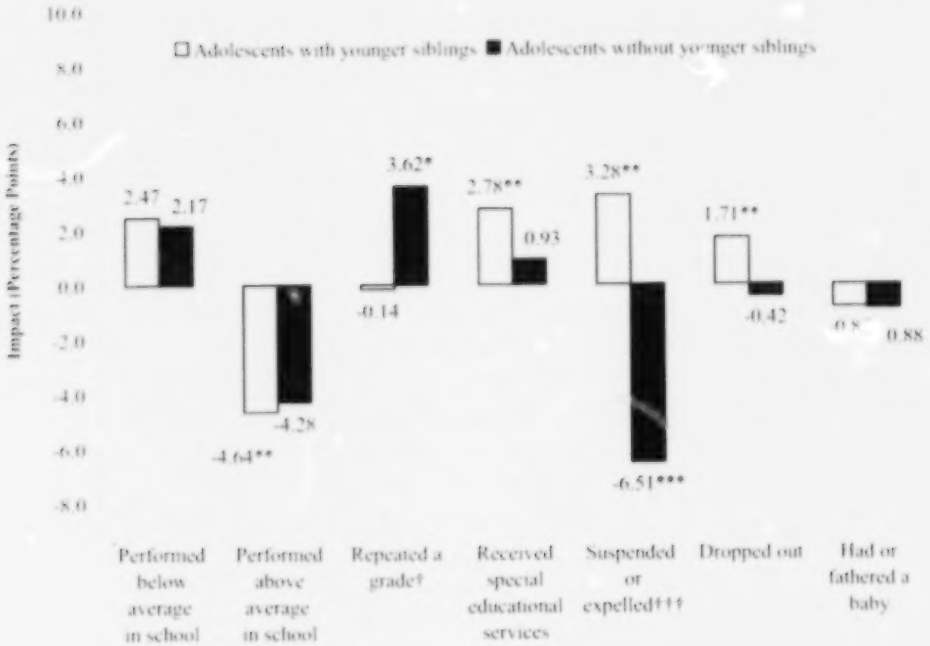
[69]The difference between the impacts on suspensions in the two subgroups was statistically significant.

[70]The difference between the impacts on grade repetition in the two subgroups was statistically significant.

[71]For adolescents without younger siblings, FTP increased the number of hours spent in care, and SSP increased the percentage who participated in supervised activities.

Figure 4

Average Effects on Selected Adolescent Outcomes, by Presence of Younger Siblings in the Household



SOURCES: MDRC calculations based on follow-up survey data from the following studies: FTP, Jobs First, Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN, MFIP, NEWWS, SSP, and WRP.

NOTES: In each study, adolescents were selected for inclusion in the sample on the basis of their age at random assignment (10-16 years) and their age at follow-up (12-18 years). See Table 1 for details.

Two-tailed t-tests were applied to differences between the program and control group outcomes, averaged across programs. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: * = 10 percent; ** = 5 percent; *** = 1 percent.

Two-tailed t-tests were applied to differences between the programs' impacts on the two adolescent subgroups. Statistical significance levels are indicated next to the outcome labels as: † = 10 percent; †† = 5 percent; ††† = 1 percent.

Standard errors of the impact estimates for each program were adjusted to account for shared variance between siblings.

See Appendix A for more information on the measures in this figure.

For detailed impacts on all the measures examined in each study, see Unit 4 of the Technical Resources for this report (Gennetian et al., 2002).

sistent with the observed effects of programs that increased income; for instance, higher employment, when accompanied by higher income, would allow parents to invest financial resources in adolescents' activities, possibly protecting them from harmful effects of parental employment.

Paid work. Findings from SSP, the only study here that provides information on adolescent employment, indicate that the program increased the likelihood that adolescents were employed more than 20 hours per week. Thus, in this study, increases in maternal employment and the increases in adolescent employment that may be a result thereof may have increased delinquent behavior among adolescents but had no spillover effects on their school outcomes. (Note, however, as already discussed, that SSP did not appear to have any negative effects on measures of successful transitions into young adulthood.)[72]

The ethnographic data illustrate how maternal work may indirectly encourage some teens to seek employment and income outside the home. This, in turn, may lead them to engage in more adult behaviors, such as smoking, drinking, or sexual activity. When their mothers earn more income, teens might be inclined to follow in their footsteps because of the short-term advantages of work over education. It is also possible that mothers encourage these additional responsibilities as a way of occupying their adolescents productively while they are at work themselves. Although it cannot be determined what caused her eldest son to shift his focus from education to employment, the story of Susan, a woman who had one of the best employment outcomes in the Urban Change ethnographic sample, illustrates this possibility (Box 4).

In summary, there is both quantitative and qualitative evidence to suggest that rises in maternal employment due to welfare and employment programs can cause adolescents to take on more adult responsibilities within and outside the home. There is also some evidence linking this finding to negative effects on adolescents' school outcomes, although the present analysts cannot rule out the possibility that greater responsibilities also have positive effects on adolescent behavior. Finally, in one study, increases in work were associated with minor delinquency and drinking, but these effects did not cause lasting problems in adulthood.

Other changes in family life. As already discussed, adolescents may be particularly vulnerable to disruptions in their lives as well as to the influence of peers as they begin to think and act autonomously and form a sense of self.[73] A variety of environmental disruptions have

[72] To learn about the impacts of SSP in detail, see Units 1 and 5 of the Technical Resources for this report (Gennetian et al., 2002).

[73] Erikson, 1950/1963.

Box 4

As a Mother Joins the Work Force,
Her Older Teen Faces His Own School and Work Choices

At the time she entered the Urban Change study, Susan, a 36-year-old single white mother of two boys, was unemployed and studying toward a degree as a medical assistant. She and her sons, Dave, 17, and Joey, 14, lived in Cleveland in a house rented from the boys' paternal grandfather. About to enter his senior year, Dave was enrolled in his high school's ROTC program and, according to Susan, was unsure whether he would pursue a career in the military or go to college after graduation. Shortly after the first interview, Susan took a job at a local doctor's office that paid $9.23 per hour and provided medical, dental, vacation, and retirement benefits. She continued to attend school, thinking she would like eventually to become a registered nurse.

At the time of the next interview, Dave was also making choices about his own schooling and employment. Susan remained employed and said she was satisfied with her job, but she reported that, although Dave was enrolled in his school's work-study program, he was no longer on track academically and would not graduate on time. However, Susan did not seem particularly concerned by this, saying that Dave could "really crack the books if he want[ed] to." She appeared to be proud of Dave, supportive of the choices he made, and optimistic about his future.

Susan reported that Dave covered most of his own expenses with the $120 to $150 he earned each week and contributed $35 to help with the household — money that, without telling Dave, Susan put aside for his later use to pay for college, a car, or "something like that." She also noted that Dave occasionally smoked cigarettes, but that did not seem to upset her, perhaps because he could buy cigarettes legally by that time and or because she was a smoker herself. She also disclosed that Dave was sexually active and that he and his girlfriend used contraception.

At the next interview, Susan remained in the same job, and Dave, now a young adult, was still living with her. Dave had not finished high school and was working as a chef for a hotel. He was planning to enroll in a computer correspondence course that would allow him to get a GED.

Despite the choice that Dave made to work rather than finish his schooling, when asked how her working affected her sons, Susan said it had helped them feel better about themselves "because they [had] always felt left out" when she was on welfare. Thanks to her larger income, they were now able to afford more of the things they wanted to buy and to enjoy more recreational activities. She reported that both of her kids were doing well and helped with cooking, cleaning, and other house chores. Susan felt like she was very close to both her sons and that they could come to her with anything.

been shown to have negative consequences for adolescents' self-esteem and school performance.[74] Those for which data are available here include marriage of the parent and other changes in family composition, moves to new neighborhoods, changes in neighborhood quality, and changes in parenting.[75] Each of these aspects of family life was affected in at least one study in which negative effects on adolescents were observed.

Marriage and family composition. It is hard to predict whether marriage of the parent would affect adolescents positively or negatively. On the one hand, marriage could improve adolescents' school outcomes by giving them access to more financial or social resources than would be available with only one parent in the household. In addition, adolescents whose responsibilities for younger siblings interfere with their schooling might be liberated from those responsibilities to some extent when another adult joins the household. On the other hand, adolescents often find themselves in conflict with new stepparents, which could affect them adversely.

Information on family structure and other aspects of household composition was collected in the studies of all 16 programs. Most of the programs that had negative effects on adolescents' school outcomes did not affect whether the parent cohabited with an unrelated adult, marriage of the parent, or other aspects of household composition. However, one program that had negative effects on adolescents' school outcomes also decreased the likelihood that the mother was married at the time of the survey. Given the lack of clear expectations regarding how marriage of the parent would influence adolescent outcomes and, more important, the fact that few of the programs that worsened adolescents' school outcomes had any impact on family structure, it is unlikely that the effects on family structure were a driving force behind the negative effects on adolescents found in these studies.

Family moves and neighborhood quality. Family moves could affect adolescents positively or negatively, depending on factors such as the quality of the new neighborhood relative to that of the old one. Frequent moves, however, are likely to be detrimental.

Information about neighborhood quality was collected in seven studies, yielding data on nine programs. Three of the programs increased the percentage of parents who reported that they lived in a "poor quality" neighborhood. However, only two of these three programs affected adolescents' school outcomes negatively. (Note that the move itself is unlikely to have been a factor because these three programs did not affect families' likelihood of moving, suggesting that program group families were as likely as control group families to move but moved to neighborhoods of lower quality.) In addition, parents in a fourth program, one that had no effect

[74]Simmons, Burgeson, Carlton-Ford, and Blyth, 1987.

[75]For impacts on many of these outcomes, see Unit 5 of the Technical Resources for this report (Gennetian et al., 2002).

on adolescents' school outcomes, were more likely than control group parents to report that they were in a "safe" neighborhood. The other five programs had no effects on neighborhood quality.

Parenting. While one direct effect of increased maternal employment may be to reduce the amount of time that adolescents spend with their mothers, another effect may be to change the quality of the parenting that children receive. In interviews with mothers in the Urban Change ethnographic study who had recently become employed, mothers frequently talked about lacking energy for parenting and needing to accomplish household chores or to sleep while at home.[76]

Direct information about parenting of adolescents was collected only in the SSP study, which found that adolescents in the program group were more likely to experience negative or harsh parenting than adolescents in the control group, although the groups' outcomes on a variety of other parenting measures (based on reports from adolescents as well as parents) did not differ.[77] SSP also increased maternal employment but produced no effect on adolescents' school outcomes. Thus, even though there could have been a link between increased employment and harsher parenting, the change in parenting did not produce negative effects on school outcomes.

Three of the studies, representing four programs, gathered information about mothers' psychological well-being and the quality of parenting for younger children with adolescent siblings; because the parenting measures focused on treatment of younger siblings, they can serve as indirect measures of parenting of adolescents. Two of the four programs examined in these studies produced negative effects on adolescents' school outcomes. And although none affected indicators of maternal depression, two had negative effects on parenting: One program decreased warm parenting, and one program increased aggravation.[78] Thus, in three of the five programs (including SSP) for which information about parenting in families of adolescents is available, increases in employment were accompanied by some indications of decreases in the quality of parenting. This evidence raises the possibility that harsher parenting is a link between higher maternal employment and worse school outcomes for adolescents. It is important to keep in mind, however, that out of the multiple measures of parenting quality used in each study, only one showed an unfavorable effect. Moreover, this kind of nonexperimental analysis does not allow conclusions about causality to be drawn with any confidence. It is possible, for example, that the causal arrow points the other way: Adolescents may respond negatively to maternal

[76]London et al., 2001.

[77]Morris and Michalopoulos, 2000.

[78]Warm parenting was measured using maternal responses to questions about the number of times the mother gave her child physical affection or praise or "bragged about" her child. Aggravation was measured using maternal responses to questions including "Is your child much harder to care for than most?" and "Have you felt that your child does things that really bother you a lot?"

employment (because they feel their mothers are less available to them), and mothers in turn may respond with harsher parenting as they try to cope with changes in their adolescents' behavior.

Tina's case underscores the complexity and interrelatedness of employment, parenting, and family dynamics. As her case illustrates, calling on teens to provide more care for their younger siblings can raise tensions among siblings, which may in turn lead to harsher parenting and feelings of incompetence or frustration among older children. This suggests that, for younger children in particular, the effects of maternal employment on parenting must be construed broadly to include "parenting" provided by older children who take on new caretaking roles. Tina's experiences also highlight how the conflict between maternal employment and child care responsibilities can lead to far-reaching changes in the family.

In summary, none of the patterns of results concerning family structure, moves, or neighborhood appears to be consistent enough to account for the programs' negative effects on adolescents' school outcomes. Although much less information is available about parenting, parent-adolescent interactions remain a potential explanation for some of these negative effects.

The evidence available here most consistently points to two findings. First, unlike younger children, adolescents (particularly those with younger siblings) are not given additional structured activities or supervision as their mothers' employment increases. Second, they may be expected to take on more adult responsibilities — such as to provide care for their younger siblings or to work outside the home — than they would in the absence of these programs. In view of the limitations inherent in this analysis, however, there is an urgent need for further analysis of these data as well as for new studies that shed light on how to support the positive development of youth as maternal employment among low-income families increasingly becomes the norm.

Why do welfare and work policies affect adolescents differently than elementary school-aged children?

The evidence presented here suggests not only why some adolescents fare better than others under new welfare and work policies but also why the adolescent children of low-income parents have fared worse, on average, than their elementary school-aged counterparts with respect to school outcomes. This is an important question to address in order to advise policymakers and program operators about how they might tailor policies or program operations to the needs of children of different ages.[39]

[39] Of course, some parents in these samples had both young children and adolescent-aged children. Future work from the Next Generation project will seek to disentangle how the ages and number of siblings influence program effects.

One possibility is that parents of younger children respond differently to program interventions than do parents of adolescent children, leading to differences in economic impacts on families. For example, parents of younger children might be more uneasy about being required to work than are parents of adolescents, leading to smaller employment impacts for the former group. But examination of the economic effects of the programs discussed here suggests that, for each policy approach, families with adolescents experienced roughly similar changes in employment and other measures of economic and family well-being as did families with elementary school-aged children.

Second, parents of adolescents might have systematically different characteristics than parents of elementary school-aged children. For example, because parents of adolescent children are older and have received welfare longer, on average, they may feel more stressed than do parents of younger children about starting on a new employment path. In two of the studies examined here — the FTP and SSP evaluations — analyses were conducted to determine whether the substantial differences in the results for children of different ages could be explained by demographic differences in their families. These analyses turned up no evidence that differences in parents' characteristics caused the differences in effects on children.[80]

The most likely possibility, then, is that children of different ages have different needs or, relatedly, that the environmental changes wrought by maternal employment are not equally successful at meeting the needs of children of different ages. As already mentioned, there is some evidence that the negative impacts for adolescents depend on changes in their home and out-of-home environments, such as less supervision by adults, greater responsibility for younger siblings, and more pressure to work long hours outside the home. In contrast, in many of these programs, there were increases in the use of child care for elementary school-aged children, suggesting that the ways in which families adapt to welfare and employment programs may be more supportive of younger children's than adolescents' development.

Conclusions and Policy Implications

- **Adolescents' school progress is affected adversely by a variety of welfare and work policies targeted at single parents. Averaged across studies, the impacts are small, but any harm to these high-risk youth is noteworthy.**

The average impacts on school outcomes include a reduction in school performance as well as increases in adolescents' grade repetition and receipt of special educational services. However, these policies did not increase the average rates of school dropout or suspensions, nor did they affect teen parenting. While a few of the studies revealed scattered negative effects on

[80]Bloom et al., 2000; Morris and Michalopoulos, 2000.

minor delinquency, substance use, and police involvement, these outcomes were not measured in most of the studies, preventing systematic assessment across programs.

It is difficult to predict how the observed declines in school-related outcomes will play out for adolescents in the longer run. The average effects are small, and there are no average effects on some important outcomes. For the few programs for which appropriate data are available, there is some evidence that adolescents who were 16 to 18 at follow-up were more likely to drop out of school, but there is little evidence of long-term harm for those who were 19 to 23 at follow-up. At the same time, any worsening of outcomes for adolescents from low-income families is of concern because they are already severely disadvantaged; national data indicate, for instance, that they are more likely to skip school, repeat a grade, and drop out of school than are adolescents from higher-income families.[81] Moreover, as discussed in more detail shortly, there is evidence of more troubling negative effects on a large segment of low-income adolescents, namely, those who have younger siblings.

- **Adolescents who had younger siblings experienced the most pervasive and troubling negative effects as a result of the programs.**

For most of the outcomes examined, the negative effects are concentrated among adolescents who had younger siblings. Of particular concern is the finding that program group adolescents with younger siblings were more likely than their control group counterparts to be suspended from and to drop out of school, although these effects were not observed for the full sample of adolescents. Program group adolescents with younger siblings were also less likely than their control group counterparts to participate in out-of-school activities, and there is some evidence that they were more likely than their control group counterparts to care for their elementary school-aged siblings. Adolescents who did not have younger siblings, in contrast, experienced more mixed effects — for instance, an increase in grade repetition and a decrease in suspensions from school. These findings suggest that the programs' detrimental effects on adolescents may result, at least in part, from the unmet child care needs associated with maternal employment.

Data from the handful of studies that examined adolescents' after-school activities suggest that adolescents with younger siblings faced extra challenges for three reasons. First, as a result of their parents' participation in a welfare or work program — unlike those without younger siblings — they did not receive more structured supervision or participate in more after-school activities than their control group counterparts. Second, they were more likely than their control group counterparts to provide care for their younger siblings. Finally, based on the only study that looked at adolescents' paid work, the programs increased the proportion who

[81] National Center for Education Statistics, 1995, 2000.

worked more than 20 hours per week among those with younger siblings but not among those without younger siblings.

- **While the average effects are "best estimates" of how adolescents have responded to these changes in the welfare system, there is considerable variation in impacts across individual programs. At least some negative effects were found for all three key policies that form the foundation of most states' current welfare programs — mandatory employment services, earnings supplements, and time limits.**

It is difficult to find any systematic distinctions between the programs that produced negative effects on adolescents and those that did not. Some individual programs had larger negative effects than the average effects across programs, while other programs had few or no negative effects. Importantly, however, the individual programs had very few positive effects on adolescent outcomes. For elementary school-aged children, policies that increased employment and income benefited elementary school-aged children, suggesting that income played an important role by mitigating negative effects or amplifying positive effects of employment in this age group. For adolescents, however, all three policy approaches, including those that increased both employment and family income, produced some negative effects.

There was little evidence that aspects of adolescents' lives that were affected by the welfare and work policies under study other than less supervision by adults and greater adult responsibilities — such as family structure and neighborhood quality — played an important role in mitigating or exacerbating the negative effects of maternal employment. Other possible influences, such as changes in parenting behavior, could not be assessed conclusively with the available data.

The challenges faced by adolescents whose parents were in these programs are probably representative of those faced by other low-income adolescents whose parents are not involved in the TANF system but who work. Two patterns in the analysis presented here support this conclusion. First, negative effects were observed not only for programs that mandated work or participation in work-related activities and but also for programs that provided incentives to work voluntarily. Second, the fact that negative effects on adolescents are associated with their taking on greater responsibilities for younger siblings suggests that the forces driving the effects have to do with problems raised by work, child care, and the resources available to balance the two, which are not unique to parents in the TANF system.

- **The inflexibility of the jobs typically held by low-income workers exacerbates single parents' already difficult task of juggling work and family responsibilities.**

Ethnographic interviews make it clear that single parents often struggle to meet both the expectations of the welfare system and their employers on the one hand and the needs of their children on the other. Parents are often aware of difficulties their children are facing in school but find it nearly impossible to address the problems when they have jobs that provide no time off or do not offer flexible work schedules.

- **The TANF system could work with parents who are making the transition into employment or stepping up their hours of employment to minimize potential negative effects on their children.**

While the findings appear to have implications for youth policy in general, forging new paths within the TANF system could also be a useful way to target new programs to low-income adolescents, who are most at risk. Welfare programs could try to use parents' increased employment to create new positive trajectories for adolescents as their family circumstances change. Recommendations specific to the TANF system include:

1. Develop two-generation service approaches that link families with extracurricular programs already in the community or build new direct services designed to meet the particular needs of TANF families. States have the flexibility to do this already, and the federal government could play a role by providing new resources for these efforts, support for evaluations to learn what works, or technical assistance aimed at encouraging the expansion of programs that have already shown promise. One of the challenges of this approach is to encourage the highest-risk youth to participate.

2. Provide counseling to parents of adolescents about the implications of their working (including their work hours and job choices) for their adolescents' well-being, and help them devise strategies for keeping their children on a positive track.

3. Educate parents about the potential risks for adolescents of responsibilities such as employment and caretaking of younger siblings. Also, provide adequate child care and other services for younger siblings in the family to give parents practical alternatives to asking their adolescent children to take on home responsibilities.

- **Policymakers should place priority on understanding how adolescents are affected by maternal employment and on testing new approaches in programs for low-income youth and their families.**

It would be premature to prescribe a nationwide response to the finding that welfare and work policies can have adverse effects on adolescent children's school outcomes given that the

reasons are neither conclusively nor completely understood, the long-run implications are unclear, and, on average, the effects are small. At the same time, it is already known that low-income adolescents are at a severe disadvantage relative to their national counterparts with respect to school completion and other outcomes that are important for the transition to young adulthood. With an increasing proportion of low-income mothers in the labor force — in part because of the welfare system's new requirements and in part because of broader societal and economic trends — these results underscore the need to learn more about what helps low-income youth succeed. In particular, there is a need for large-scale studies both inside and outside the TANF system of new approaches for low-income youth and their families.

While much more work is needed to find out what works best for whom, there is evidence that the most promising programs are those that provide youth with consistent relationships with caring adults, afford new challenges and opportunities to build skills, and maintain contact with young people over a long period of time.[82] Examples of programs with positive effects on adolescents, some of which have been rigorously evaluated, are well-structured mentoring programs such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, Conservation Corps, the Quantum Opportunities Program, and YouthBuild, all of which aim to develop adolescents' competencies with varying degrees of emphasis on academic achievement, life skills, work, and community service. One new study, the Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ Demonstration and Evaluation Project, will test two-generation approaches to increasing employment among parents who face significant barriers to employment and to improving outcomes for their adolescents and young children. This study, which has been launched by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is being evaluated by MDRC.

This research synthesis provides systematic evidence that welfare and work policies targeted at low-income parents can adversely affect adolescents' school outcomes. Negative effects were observed both for programs that required mothers to work or participate in employment-related activities and for programs that encouraged mothers to work voluntarily. This pattern suggests that the well-being of adolescents may be compromised as their single mothers negotiate the challenges of working in low-wage jobs, which often have unpredictable and nontraditional schedules, whether or not their mothers work because of TANF's requirements and incentives. In other words, the present findings have important implications not only for welfare-reliant families but also for working-poor families who have never received welfare.

The full story of why welfare reform policies affect some adolescents more adversely than others is likely to be complex. Although further research is needed before particular policy remedies can be recommended, the analysis in this document points to the potential benefits of limiting adolescents' home responsibilities when their single mothers work and ensuring that

[82]Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Murray, and Foster, 1998.

adolescents themselves are supervised and have access to positive opportunities. The present work also raises questions about the long-term effects of welfare and work programs on adolescents' transition into adulthood, the potential role of family size and siblings' ages in explaining responses to maternal employment, and the relationship between children's ages and the timing of employment-related interventions in influencing the effects of these interventions on child and adolescent well-being.

Appendixes

Appendix A

Adolescent Outcome Measures

The measures of adolescent well-being available in the eight studies examined in this document were collected at the time of the most recent follow-up survey. Nearly all the measures are based on maternal reports. In the FTP, Jobs First, and MFIP evaluations, some adolescent outcomes (for instance, grade repetition in the FTP evaluation) were measured only for the adolescent siblings of elementary school-aged children who were the focus of a more detailed survey; these data were excluded from the synthesis analysis because they are not representative of the full sample of adolescents in the studies.[1]

School Outcomes

School performance (measured in the studies of FTP, Jobs First, Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN, MFIP, New Hope, SSP, and WRP). This outcome was measured using maternal responses to the following question: "Based on your knowledge of your child's schoolwork, including report cards, how has your child been doing in school overall?" Mothers expressed their responses on a five-point scale ranging from "5 = very well" to "1 = not well at all." This interval scale was used both to calculate the average score and to create two dichotomous measures of school performance: (1) below-average school performance, coded as 1 if the mother gave the child a "1" or "2" and coded as 0 otherwise, and (2) above-average school performance, coded as 1 if the mother gave the child a "4" or "5" and coded as 0 otherwise. All the measures of school performance were assessed only for those children who were in school at the time of the follow-up survey. Children who were reported not to be in school at follow-up were coded as 0 on the dichotomous measures and excluded from the average school performance score. Based on data from the studies of New Hope and SSP, there is a statistically significant correlation between maternal reports and test assessments of children's school performance: .37 with math achievement scores for 12- to 14-year-olds, .24 with literacy scores for 15- to 18-year-olds, and .26 with Woodcock-Johnson Letter-Word Identification scores for 12- to 16-year-olds. The SSP study also collected adolescents' ratings of their own school performance.

Grade repetition (measured in NEWWS and in the studies of Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN, MFIP, New Hope, SSP, and WRP). This outcome was measured using maternal reports as to whether the child had repeated a grade at any point during the follow-up period.

Suspension and/or expulsion from school (measured in NEWWS and in the studies of FTP, Jobs First, Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN, New Hope, and WRP). This outcome

[1] Effects on these outcomes for adolescent-aged siblings in FTP and Jobs First can be found in Bloom et al. (2000) and Bloom et al. (2002), respectively. Comparable outcomes for adolescent-aged siblings were not analyzed in the MFIP evaluation because of the small sample size.

was measured using maternal reports as to whether the child had been suspended and/or expelled from school at any point during the follow-up period.

School dropout (measured in NEWWS and in the studies of FTP, Jobs First, Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN, MFIP, SSP, and WRP). This outcome was measured using maternal reports as to whether the child was in school and, if not, whether dropping out of school was the reason. In NEWWS, mothers were asked whether the child had dropped out of school at any point during the follow-up period; in the other studies, they were asked whether the child was not in school at the time of the follow-up interview because of school dropout.

Receipt of special educational services (measured in NEWWS and in the studies of Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN, New Hope, SSP, and WRP). This outcome was measured using maternal reports as to whether a child went to a special class or school or received special help in school for any physical, emotional, or mental condition. In the New Hope and WRP evaluations, mothers were asked whether the child had received special educational services at any point during the follow-up period; in the other studies, they were asked whether the child had ever received special educational services.

Behavior

Teen parenting (measured in NEWWS and the studies of FTP, Jobs First, and WRP). This outcome was measured using maternal responses to the following questions: "Has your child had, or fathered, a baby?" and "How old was your child when he or she had his or her first baby?"

School behavior problems (measured in the studies of New Hope, MFIP, SSP, and WRP). This outcome was measured using maternal responses to the question "Since [random assignment], have you been contacted by your child's school regarding any behavioral problems your child may be having?"

Trouble with police (measured in the studies of FTP, SSP, and WRP). In the FTP and WRP evaluations, this outcome was measured using maternal responses to the question "Has your child ever been in trouble with the police since random assignment?" In the SSP evaluation, this outcome was measured using maternal responses to the item "[Indicate the] frequency [with which] your child was questioned by police."

Other delinquent behavior (measured in the SSP study).[2] The SSP study is the only one that collected in-depth information from parents and adolescents themselves on adolescents' minor and major delinquent behavior, including reports of the frequency with which they drank, used drugs, smoked, stayed out late, and skipped school.

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[2]For more information about these measures, see Morris and Michalopoulos (2000).

Appendix B

Meta-Analytic Techniques

The set of programs examined in this document provides a unique opportunity to understand the average effects of welfare and work policies for parents on outcomes for their adolescent children. The average effects can help shed light on whether and to what extent the scattered negative effects found in various individual program evaluations recently conducted by MDRC are robust or due to chance. The methods used in the present analysis are more systematic than those previously used to evaluate the robustness of the adolescent findings, which involved tallying and comparing the numbers of positive and negative results.

The average effects presented in this synthesis reflect the results of a meta-analytic analysis conducted using techniques outlined in *Toolkit for Practical Meta-Analysis*.[1] A rigorous approach to discerning patterns across studies, meta-analysis can provide the statistical power to estimate a policy's overall effect. Traditionally used by psychologists, a meta-analysis is a systematic review of a population of studies that investigate a similar process or a similar type of outcome. In contrast to tallying methods, meta-analytic techniques produce weighted average effect sizes that take into account the different levels of confidence in each individual study's findings (these differences arise from differences in sample size or in sampling error across studies).

The studies examined here lend themselves to meta-analysis because, despite the relatively small numbers of impact estimates, they are of the same high methodological quality (all used random assignment and achieved high survey response rates), included commensurable measures, and applied similar statistical tests to detect effects. It is important to emphasize, however, that this synthesis does not include all experimental studies of welfare and employment policies ever conducted.

Effect sizes form the centerpiece of a meta-analysis, serving as a standardized measure that ensures comparability across studies. An effect size converts each program impact — that is, the difference between the program group outcome and the control group outcome on each measure — into standard deviation units, thus adjusting for any outcome differences arising from survey measurement (for instance, variations in the period of time that a measure covers). Assuming that samples from different studies are drawn from the same underlying population, effect sizes can be used as indicators of the underlying impacts on outcomes of interest.

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[1]Lipsey and Wilson, 1996. The authors of this synthesis thank Mark Lipsey for providing detailed comments and guidance on this analysis.

An average effect size across programs — hereafter referred to as the overall average effect size — was calculated for each outcome analyzed in this synthesis. As shown in equation 1, the effect size of each program's impact (d_i) is equal to the average program group outcome minus the average control group outcome, divided by the control group standard deviation.

$$d_i = \frac{(x_{i,} - x_{i,})}{\sigma} \tag{1}$$

Following standard meta-analytic procedures,[2] an inverse variance weight was created for each program's effect size, as shown in equation 2.

$$w_i = \frac{1}{v_i}, \text{ where } v_i \text{ is the variance of the effect size.} \tag{2}$$

The overall average effect size (ES) was calculated by multiplying each effect size by its weight, summing the weighted effect sizes, and dividing this sum by the sum of the weights, as shown in equation 3.

$$ES = \frac{\sum_i w_i (d_i)}{\sum_i w_i} \tag{3}$$

The overall average effect size thus represents the best estimate of the effect across studies.

Meta-analysis also allows for the construction of confidence intervals around the overall average effect size. As shown in equation 4, the variance of the overall average effect size equals the sum of the effect size weights, so its standard error (SEES) equals the square root of the sum of the weights.

$$SEES = \sqrt{\frac{1}{\sum_i w_i}} \tag{4}$$

For ease of presentation, the overall average effect sizes were converted back into the original metric of percentage point impacts. To do so, the overall average effect size was multiplied by the pooled standard deviation for the control group, which is defined in equation 5, to derive the percentage point impact. The pooled program group mean was computed by adding this impact to the pooled control group mean, which is defined in equation 6. Thus, the average

[2]Lipsey and Wilson, 1996.

percentage point impact provides the same information as the overall average effect size but expresses that information in the originally reported metric.

$$\textit{Pooled standard deviation for the control group} = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_i (n_i - 1) sd_i^2}{\sum_i (n_i - 1)}}, \tag{5}$$

where sd_i is the control group standard deviation.

$$\textit{Pooled control group mean} = \frac{\sum_i (n_i - 1) X_i}{\sum_i (n_i - 1)}, \tag{6}$$

where n_i is the control group sample size and X_i is the control group mean.

Whether effect sizes are similar across programs is an important consideration for an interpretation of the results of a meta-analysis. The techniques followed in this research synthesis assume that the studies all drew samples of adolescents from a single population with one "true" effect size. The homogeneity test — which is based on the Q statistic, shown in equation 7 — allows one to determine whether the variability in observed effects is greater than that expected by chance in a set of estimates based on samples from the same underlying population.

$$Q = \sum_i (d_i - ES)^2 w_i \tag{7}$$

In the analyses presented in this document, on none of the adolescent measures examined was the homogeneity of the effect sizes across programs statistically significant.[1] However, the homogeneity test has relatively low statistical power when applied to a small number of estimates (whereas many meta-analyses draw on more than 17 estimates, the present one had only nine estimates available for some outcomes and no more than 16 estimates for any outcome). When the Q statistic reveals a statistically significant level of heterogeneity, researchers may decide that there is systematic variation among the estimates and adopt "random" or "mixed effects" models. Because of the low power of the homogeneity test in the present context, however, possible explanations for systematic differences in effect sizes were explored using less

[1]The Q statistic follows a chi-square distribution with $k - 1$ degrees of freedom, where k is the number of effect sizes. The effect sizes for a given outcome were considered heterogenous if the statistical significance level was less than .10.

formal techniques. One such technique, which entails examining the meta-analytic averages by key policy approach, is presented and discussed in the body of this document.

One challenge to the application of the meta-analytic techniques used here is that some of the studies tested more than one program model in one site. In these studies, which used three-group research designs, the two program groups shared a control group, which means that the estimated effect sizes in each of these sites are correlated, thus violating the homogeneity test's independence assumption. For these cases (for example, the MFIP and WRP evaluations), the overall average effect sizes were also calculated using pooled within-study estimates to assess the robustness of the findings, and the results were no different from the homogeneity test results. Future work from the Next Generation project will investigate other weighting techniques that adjust for correlated effect sizes.

Another challenge in the application of the meta-analytic techniques in this synthesis is that some of the subgroup analyses do not adjust for the fact that the gender and age subgroup comparisons are not based on independent samples of adolescents. For example, a family can include both an adolescent female and an adolescent male. A preliminary investigation indicates, however, that only about 10 percent of families in the study samples included adolescents of both sexes or adolescents in both the adolescent age groups examined, suggesting that the results of the current analysis are unlikely to have been greatly affected by correlations between siblings in a family.

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Note: For works not published by MDRC, the publisher's name is shown in parentheses. With a few exceptions, this list includes reports published by MDRC since 1999. A complete publications list is available from MDRC and on its Web site (www.mdrc.org), from which copies of MDRC's publications can also be downloaded.

Reforming Welfare and Making Work Pay

Next Generation Project

A collaboration among researchers at MDRC and several other leading research institutions focused on studying the effects of welfare, antipoverty, and employment policies on children and families.

How Welfare and Work Policies Affect Children: A Synthesis of Research. 2001. Pamela Morris, Aletha Huston, Greg Duncan, Danielle Crosby, Johannes Bos.

How Welfare and Work Policies Affect Employment and Income: A Synthesis of Research. 2001. Dan Bloom, Charles Michalopoulos.

ReWORKing Welfare: Technical Assistance for States and Localities

A multifaceted effort to assist states and localities in designing and implementing their welfare reform programs. The project includes a series of "how-to" guides, conferences, briefings, and customized, in-depth technical assistance.

After AFDC: Welfare-to-Work Choices and Challenges for States. 1997. Dan Bloom.

Work First: How to Implement an Employment-Focused Approach to Welfare Reform. 1997. Amy Brown.

Business Partnerships: How to Involve Employers in Welfare Reform. 1998. Amy Brown, Maria Buck, Erik Skinner.

Promoting Participation: How to Increase Involvement in Welfare-to-Work Activities. 1999. Gayle Hamilton, Susan Scrivener.

Encouraging Work, Reducing Poverty: The Impact of Work Incentive Programs. 2000. Gordon Berlin.

Steady Work and Better Jobs: How to Help Low-Income Parents Sustain Employment and Advance in the Workforce. 2000. Julie Strawn, Karin Martinson.

Beyond Work First: How to Help Hard-to-Employ Individuals Get Jobs and Succeed in the Workforce. 2001. Amy Brown.

Project on Devolution and Urban Change

A multi-year study in four major urban counties — Cuyahoga County, Ohio (which includes the city of Cleveland), Los Angeles, Miami-Dade, and Philadelphia — that examines how welfare reforms are being implemented and affect poor people, their neighborhoods, and the institutions that serve them.

Big Cities and Welfare Reform: Early Implementation and Ethnographic Findings from the Project on Devolution and Urban Change. 1999. Janet Quint, Kathryn Edin, Maria Buck, Barbara Fink, Yolanda Padilla, Olis Simmons-Hewitt, Mary Valmont.

Food Security and Hunger in Poor, Mother-Headed Families in Four U.S. Cities. 2000. Denise Polit, Andrew London, John Martinez.

Assessing the Impact of Welfare Reform on Urban Communities: The Urban Change Project and Methodological Considerations. 2000. Charles Michalopoulos, Johannes Bos, Robert Lalonde, Nandita Verma.

Post-TANF Food Stamp and Medicaid Benefits: Factors That Aid or Impede Their Receipt. 2001. Janet Quint, Rebecca Widom.

Social Service Organizations and Welfare Reform. 2001. Barbara Fink, Rebecca Widom.

Monitoring Outcomes for Cuyahoga County's Welfare Leavers: How Are They Faring? 2001. Nandita Verma, Claudia Coulton.

The Health of Poor Urban Women: Findings from the Project on Devolution and Urban Change. 2001. Denise Polit, Andrew London, John Martinez.

Is Work Enough? The Experiences of Current and Former Welfare Mothers Who Work. 2001. Denise Polit, Rebecca Widom, Kathryn Edin, Stan Bowie, Andrew London, Ellen Scott, Abel Valenzuela.

Readying Welfare Recipients for Work: Lessons from Four Big Cities as They Implement Welfare Reform. 2002. Thomas Brock, Laura Nelson, Megan Reiter.

Wisconsin Works

This study examines how Wisconsin's welfare-to-work program, one of the first to end welfare as an entitlement, is administered in Milwaukee.

Complaint Resolution in the Context of Welfare Reform: How W-2 Settles Disputes. 2001. Suzanne Lynn.

Exceptions to the Rule: The Implementation of 24-Month Time-Limit Extensions in W-2. 2001. Susan Gooden, Fred Doolittle.

Matching Applicants with Services: Initial Assessments in the Milwaukee County W-2 Program. 2001. Susan Gooden, Fred Doolittle, Ben Glispie.

Time Limits

Florida's Family Transition Program

An evaluation of Florida's initial time-limited welfare program, which includes services, requirements, and financial work incentives intended to reduce long-term welfare receipt and help welfare recipients find and keep jobs.

The Family Transition Program: Implementation and Three-Year Impacts of Florida's Initial Time-Limited Welfare Program. 1999. Dan Bloom, Mary Farrell, James Kemple, Nandita Verma.

The Family Transition Program: Final Report on Florida's Initial Time-Limited Welfare Program 2000. Dan Bloom, James Kemple, Pamela Morris, Susan Scrivener, Nandita Verma, Richard Hendra.

Cross-State Study of Time-Limited Welfare

An examination of the implementation of some of the first state-initiated time-limited welfare programs.

Welfare Time Limits: An Interim Report Card. 1999. Dan Bloom.

Connecticut's Jobs First Program

An evaluation of Connecticut's statewide time-limited welfare program, which includes financial work incentives and requirements to participate in employment-related services aimed at rapid job placement. This study provides some of the earliest information on the effects of time limits in major urban areas.

Connecticut Post-Time Limit Tracking Study: Six-Month Survey Results. 1999. Jo Anna Hunter-Manns, Dan Bloom.

Jobs First: Implementation and Early Impacts of Connecticut's Welfare Reform Initiative. 2000. Dan Bloom, Laura Melton, Charles Michalopoulos, Susan Scrivener, Johanna Walter.

Connecticut's Jobs First Program: An Analysis of Welfare Leavers. 2000. Laura Melton, Dan Bloom.

Final Report on Connecticut's Welfare Reform Initiative. 2002. Dan Bloom, Susan Scrivener, Charles Michalopoulos, Pamela Morris, Richard Hendra, Diana Adams-Ciardullo, Johanna Walter.

Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project

An evaluation of Vermont's statewide welfare reform program, which includes a work requirement after a certain period of welfare receipt, and financial work incentives.

Forty-Two Month Impacts of Vermont's Welfare Restructuring Project. 1999. Richard Hendra, Charles Michalopoulos.

WRP: Key Findings from the Forty-Two-Month Client Survey. 2000. Dan Bloom, Richard Hendra, Charles Michalopoulos.

Financial Incentives

Encouraging Work, Reducing Poverty: The Impact of Work Incentive Programs. 2000. Gordon Berlin.

Minnesota Family Investment Program

An evaluation of Minnesota's pilot welfare reform initiative, which aims to encourage work, alleviate poverty, and reduce welfare dependence.

Reforming Welfare and Rewarding Work: Final Report on the Minnesota Family Investment Program. 2000:

Volume 1: Effects on Adults. Cynthia Miller, Virginia Knox, Lisa Gennetian, Martey Dodoo, Jo Anna Hunter, Cindy Redcross.

Volume 2: Effects on Children. Lisa Gennetian, Cynthia Miller.

Reforming Welfare and Rewarding Work: A Summary of the Final Report on the Minnesota Family Investment Program. 2000. Virginia Knox, Cynthia Miller, Lisa Gennetian.

Final Report on the Implementation and Impacts of the Minnesota Family Investment Program in Ramsey County. 2000. Patricia Auspos, Cynthia Miller, Jo Anna Hunter.

New Hope Project

A test of a community-based, work-focused antipoverty program and welfare alternative operating in Milwaukee.

New Hope for People with Low Incomes: Two-Year Results of a Program to Reduce Poverty and Reform Welfare. 1999. Johannes Bos, Aletha Huston, Robert Granger, Greg Duncan, Thomas Brock, Vonnie McLoyd.

Canada's Self-Sufficiency Project

A test of the effectiveness of a temporary earnings supplement on the employment and welfare receipt of public assistance recipients. Reports on the Self-Sufficiency Project are available from: Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC), 275 Slater St., Suite 900, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H9, Canada. Tel.: 613-237-4311; Fax: 613-237-5045. In the United States, the reports are also available from MDRC.

Does SSP Plus Increase Employment? The Effect of Adding Services to the Self-Sufficiency Project's Financial Incentives (SRDC). 1999. Gail Quets, Philip Robins, Elsie Pan, Charles Michalopoulos, David Card.

When Financial Work Incentives Pay for Themselves: Early Findings from the Self-Sufficiency Project's Applicant Study (SRDC). 1999. Charles Michalopoulos, Philip Robins, David Card.

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SSP Plus at 36 Months: Effects of Adding Employment Services to Financial Work Incentives (SRDC). 2001. Ying Lei, Charles Michalopoulos.

Mandatory Welfare Employment Programs

National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies

Conceived and sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), with support from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), this is the largest-scale evaluation ever conducted of different strategies for moving people from welfare to employment.

Do Mandatory Welfare-to-Work Programs Affect the Well-Being of Children? A Synthesis of Child Research Conducted as Part of the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (HHS/ED). 2000. Gayle Hamilton.

Evaluating Alternative Welfare-to-Work Approaches: Two-Year Impacts for Eleven Programs (HHS/ED). 2000. Stephen Freedman, Daniel Friedlander, Gayle Hamilton, JoAnn Rock, Marisa Mitchell, Jodi Nudelman, Amanda Schweder, Laura Storto.

Impacts on Young Children and Their Families Two Years After Enrollment: Findings from the Child Outcomes Study (HHS/ED). 2000. Sharon McGroder, Martha Zaslow, Kristin Moore, Suzanne LeMenestrel.

What Works Best for Whom: Impacts of 20 Welfare-to-Work Programs by Subgroup (HHS/ED). 2000. Charles Michalopoulos, Christine Schwartz.

Evaluating Two Approaches to Case Management: Implementation, Participation Patterns, Costs, and Three-Year Impacts of the Columbus Welfare-to-Work Program (HHS/ED). 2001. Susan Scrivener, Johanna Walter.

How Effective Are Different Welfare-to-Work Approaches? Five-Year Adult and Child Impacts for Eleven Programs– Executive Summary (HHS/ED). 2001. Gayle Hamilton, Stephen Freedman, Lisa Gennetian, Charles Michalopoulos, Johanna Walter, Diana Adams-Ciardullo, Anna Gassman-Pines, Sharon McGroder, Martha Zaslow, Surjeet Ahluwalia, Jennifer Brooks.

Los Angeles's Jobs-First GAIN Program

An evaluation of Los Angeles's refocused GAIN (welfare-to-work) program, which emphasizes rapid employment. This is the first in-depth study of a full-scale "work first" program in one of the nation's largest urban areas.

The Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN Evaluation: First-Year Findings on Participation Patterns and Impacts. 1999. Stephen Freedman, Marisa Mitchell, David Navarro.

The Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN Evaluation: Final Report on a Work First Program in a Major Urban Center. 2000. Stephen Freedman, Jean Knab, Lisa Gennetian, David Navarro.

Teen Parents on Welfare

Teenage Parent Programs: A Synthesis of the Long-Term Effects of the New Chance Demonstration, Ohio's Learning, Earning, and Parenting (LEAP) Program, and the Teenage Parent Demonstration (TPD). 1998. Robert Granger, Rachel Cytron.

Ohio's LEAP Program

An evaluation of Ohio's Learning, Earning, and Parenting (LEAP) Program, which uses financial incentives to encourage teenage parents on welfare to stay in or return to school.

LEAP: Final Report on Ohio's Welfare Initiative to Improve School Attendance Among Teenage Parents. 1997. Johannes Bos, Veronica Fellerath.

New Chance Demonstration
A test of a comprehensive program of services that seeks to improve the economic status and general well-being of a group of highly disadvantaged young women and their children.

New Chance: Final Report on a Comprehensive Program for Young Mothers in Poverty and Their Children. 1997. Janet Quint, Johannes Bos, Denise Polit.
Parenting Behavior in a Sample of Young Mothers in Poverty: Results of the New Chance Observational Study. 1998. Martha Zaslow, Carolyn Eldred, editors.

Focusing on Fathers

Parents' Fair Share Demonstration
A demonstration for unemployed noncustodial parents (usually fathers) of children on welfare. PFS aims to improve the men's employment and earnings, reduce child poverty by increasing child support payments, and assist the fathers in playing a broader constructive role in their children's lives.

Fathers' Fair Share: Helping Poor Men Manage Child Support and Fatherhood (Russell Sage Foundation). 1999. Earl Johnson, Ann Levine, Fred Doolittle.
Parenting and Providing: The Impact of Parents' Fair Share on Paternal Involvement. 2000. Virginia Knox, Cindy Redcross.
Working and Earning: The Impact of Parents' Fair Share on Low-Income Fathers' Employment. 2000. John M. Martinez, Cynthia Miller.
The Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum. 2000. Eileen Hayes, with Kay Sherwood.
The Challenge of Helping Low-Income Fathers Support Their Children: Final Lessons from Parents' Fair Share. 2001. Cynthia Miller, Virginia Knox.

Career Advancement and Wage Progression

Opening Doors to Earning Credentials
An exploration of strategies for increasing low-wage workers' access to and completion of community college programs.

Opening Doors: Expanding Educational Opportunities for Low-Income Workers. 2001. Susan Golonka, Lisa Matus-Grossman.

Education Reform

Accelerated Schools
This study examines the implementation and impacts on achievement of the Accelerated Schools model, a whole-school reform targeted at at-risk students.

Evaluating the Accelerated Schools Approach: A Look at Early Implementation and Impacts on Student Achievement in Eight Elementary Schools. 2001. Howard Bloom, Sandra Ham, Laura Melton, Julienne O'Brien.

Career Academies
The largest and most comprehensive evaluation of a school-to-work initiative, this study examines a promising approach to high school restructuring and the school-to-work transition.

Career Academies: Building Career Awareness and Work-Based Learning Activities Through Employer Partnerships. 1999. James Kemple, Susan Poglinco, Jason Snipes.
Career Academies: Impacts on Students' Engagement and Performance in High School. 2000. James Kemple, Jason Snipes.
Career Academies: Impacts on Students' Initial Transitions to Post-Secondary Education and Employment. 2001. James Kemple.

First Things First
This demonstration and research project looks at First Things First, a whole-school reform that combines a variety of best practices aimed at raising achievement and graduation rates in both urban and rural settings.

Scaling Up First Things First: Site Selection and the Planning Year. 2002. Janet Quint.

Project GRAD
This evaluation examines Project GRAD, an education initiative targeted at urban schools and combining a number of proven or promising reforms.

Building the Foundation for Improved Student Performance: The Pre-Curricular Phase of Project GRAD Newark. 2000. Sandra Ham, Fred Doolittle, Glee Ivory Holton.

LILAA Initiative
This study of the Literacy in Libraries Across America (LILAA) initiative explores the efforts of five adult literacy programs in public libraries to improve learner persistence.

So I Made Up My Mind: Introducing a Study of Adult Learner Persistence in Library Literacy Programs. 2000. John T. Comings, Sondra Cuban.
"I Did It for Myself": Studying Efforts to Increase Adult Learner Persistence in Library Literacy

Programs. 2001. John Cummings, Sondra Cuban, Johannes Bos, Catherine Taylor.

Toyota Families in Schools

A discussion of the factors that determine whether an impact analysis of a social program is feasible and warranted, using an evaluation of a new family literacy initiative as a case study.

An Evaluability Assessment of the Toyota Families in Schools Program. 2001. Janet Quint.

Project Transition

A demonstration program that tested a combination of school-based strategies to facilitate students' transition from middle school to high school.

Project Transition: Testing an Intervention to Help High School Freshmen Succeed. 1999. Janet Quint, Cynthia Miller, Jennifer Pastor, Rachel Cytron.

Equity 2000

Equity 2000 is a nationwide initiative sponsored by the College Board to improve low-income students' access to college. The MDRC paper examines the implementation of Equity 2000 in Milwaukee Public Schools.

Getting to the Right Algebra: The Equity 2000 Initiative in Milwaukee Public Schools. 1999. Sandra Ham, Erica Walker.

School-to-Work Project

A study of innovative programs that help students make the transition from school to work or careers.

Home-Grown Lessons: Innovative Programs Linking School and Work (Jossey-Bass Publishers). 1995. Edward Pauly, Hilary Kopp, Joshua Haimson.

Home-Grown Progress: The Evolution of Innovative School-to-Work Programs. 1997. Rachel Pedraza, Edward Pauly, Hilary Kopp.

Employment and Community Initiatives

Jobs-Plus Initiative

A multi-site effort to greatly increase employment among public housing residents.

Mobilizing Public Housing Communities for Work: Origins and Early Accomplishments of the Jobs-Plus Demonstration. 1999. James Riccio.

Building a Convincing Test of a Public Housing Employment Program Using Non-Experimental Methods: Planning for the Jobs-Plus Demonstration. 1999. Howard Bloom.

Jobs-Plus Site-by-Site: An Early Look at Program Implementation. 2000. Edited by Susan Philipson Bloom with Susan Blank.

Building New Partnerships for Employment: Collaboration Among Agencies and Public Housing Residents in the Jobs-Plus Demonstration. 2001. Linda Kato, James Riccio.

Neighborhood Jobs Initiative

An initiative to increase employment in a number of low-income communities.

The Neighborhood Jobs Initiative: An Early Report on the Vision and Challenges of Bringing an Employment Focus to a Community-Building Initiative. 2001. Frieda Molina, Laura Nelson.

Connections to Work Project

A study of local efforts to increase competition in the choice of providers of employment services for welfare recipients and other low-income populations. The project also provides assistance to cutting-edge local initiatives aimed at helping such people access and secure jobs.

Designing and Administering a Wage-Paying Community Service Employment Program Under TANF: Some Considerations and Choices. 1999. Kay Sherwood.

San Francisco Works: Toward an Employer-Led Approach to Welfare Reform and Workforce Development. 2000. Steven Bliss.

Canada's Earnings Supplement Project

A test of an innovative financial incentive intended to expedite the reemployment of displaced workers and encourage full-year work by seasonal or part-year workers, thereby also reducing receipt of Unemployment Insurance.

Testing a Re-employment Incentive for Displaced Workers: The Earnings Supplement Project. 1999. Howard Bloom, Saul Schwartz, Susanna Lui-Gurr, Suk-Won Lee.

MDRC Working Papers on Research Methodology

A new series of papers that explore alternative methods of examining the implementation and impacts of programs and policies.

Building a Convincing Test of a Public Housing Employment Program Using Non-Experimental Methods: Planning for the Jobs-Plus Demonstration. 1999. Howard Bloom.

Estimating Program Impacts on Student Achievement Using "Short" Interrupted Time Series. 1999. Howard Bloom.

Using Cluster Random Assignment to Measure Program Impacts: Statistical Implications for the Evaluation of Education Programs. 1999. Howard Bloom, Johannes Bos, Suk-Won Lee.

Measuring the Impacts of Whole School Reforms: Methodological Lessons from an Evaluation of Accelerated Schools. 2001. Howard Bloom.

The Politics of Random Assignment: Implementing Studies and Impacting Policy. 2000. Judith Gueron.

Modeling the Performance of Welfare-to-Work Programs: The Effects of Program Management and Services, Economic Environment, and Client Characteristics. 2001. Howard Bloom, Carolyn Hill, James Riccio.

A Regression-Based Strategy for Defining Subgroups in a Social Experiment. 2001. James Kemple, Jason Snipes.

Extending the Reach of Randomized Social Experiments: New Directions in Evaluations of American Welfare-to-Work and Employment Initiatives. 2001. James Riccio, Howard Bloom.

About MDRC

The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan social policy research organization. We are dedicated to learning what works to improve the well-being of low-income people. Through our research and the active communication of our findings, we seek to enhance the effectiveness of social policies and programs. MDRC was founded in 1974 and is located in New York City and Oakland, California.

MDRC's current projects focus on welfare and economic security, education, and employment and community initiatives. Complementing our evaluations of a wide range of welfare reforms are new studies of supports for the working poor and emerging analyses of how programs affect children's development and their families' well-being. In the field of education, we are testing reforms aimed at improving the performance of public schools, especially in urban areas. Finally, our community projects are using innovative approaches to increase employment in low-income neighborhoods.

Our projects are a mix of demonstrations — field tests of promising program models — and evaluations of government and community initiatives, and we employ a wide range of methods to determine a program's effects, including large-scale studies, surveys, case studies, and ethnographies of individuals and families. We share the findings and lessons from our work — including best practices for program operators — with a broad audience within the policy and practitioner community, as well as the general public and the media.

Over the past quarter century, MDRC has worked in almost every state, all of the nation's largest cities, and Canada. We conduct our projects in partnership with state and local governments, the federal government, public school systems, community organizations, and numerous private philanthropies.